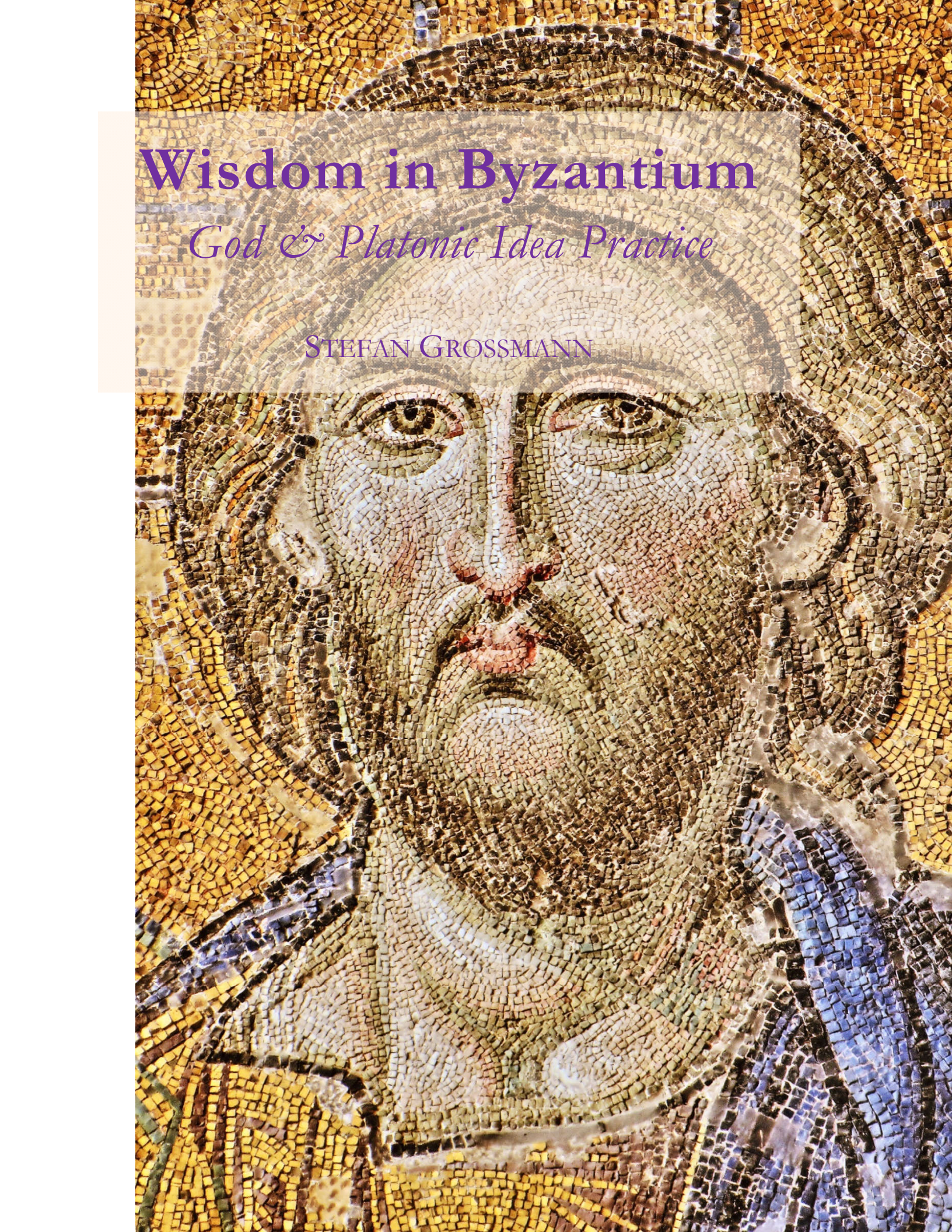




Wisdom in Byzantium

God & Platonic Idea Practice

STEFAN GROSSMANN

WISDOM IN BYZANTIUM

Wisdom is a timeless thing. Our lexicon differentiates it both from knowledge and belief. I am not quite sure what it is, a sentiment shared by legions of others who have touched upon this before me. It takes an optimist to affirm positively what wisdom is. It takes a pessimist to deny that anything at all can be said, meaningfully, about her (in older diction: Sophia). Her most visual form, mentally, may be in Boethius' *Consolation*. Supplementarily, her most distinct form for our physical senses may be in the main church of the Byzantine Empire, Hagia Sophia. Her very concept is usually no key part of philosophy, regardless of the etymology of "philosophy", meaning, "love of wisdom". A more modern view of the problem would be, arguably, that of a "knowledge" or "science" of wisdom (Sophia). That is a distanced, reflected approach that grew up only after the phase of ancient philosophy in the millennial phase that current ongoing scholarship is defining as the phase of Byzantine philosophy, in my interpretation starting in the fourth century A.D. and, quite doubtlessly, lasting until May 1453, from which incision onward the proper name should change into post-Byzantine philosophy. I penned (digitally) my reserve about the formulation "Byzantine philosophy" in 2014. I proposed to replace that formulation by "Byzantine receptions", which, in the analysis of this current book, thus could prove to be a formative of the difficult concept of wisdom (Sophia), the elusive object of philosophy proper. In terms of lead metaphors, the mirror would be typical for medieval philosophy in the west, whilst the light would be more appropriate for the comparatively more Johannine, mystical mainstream in the medieval east, in Byzantium, the mirror and the light comprising a duality of, both, a rational, and a transrational, basic approach. This already leads, however, to the status of the question as discussed in the Preface below.

Titles in this two-part series:

Stefan Grossmann, *A Framework Commentary on the Fifteen Emerald Tablets of Thoth:*

volume 1: *Byzantine Philosophy: A Framework Analysis* (the present volume)

volume 2: *Atlantean Philosophy: The Nine Bodies of Man*

As of 2017-02-23, I have published four additional books at archive.org that, partly or in whole, touch upon subjects of Byzantine philosophy, adding detail for certain questions, such as, the Renaissance transition, pagan survival (Euhemerism), general approaches in the study of Byzantine philosophy, strangeness in Turin shroud, general spirituality, Michael Psellos and the method of illumination, higher criticism and its research on the invention of the New Testament under emperor Constantine as the founding document of the intellectual history of Byzantium, reference to research on essences and energies in book Lambda of Aristotle's Metaphysics (predating St. Gregory Palamas by 1600 years), etc. Completeness has been no aim. The titles of these additional books are:

Jesus and His Gnostic School, Dionysios to Plethon to Giordano Bruno

Jesus and His Gnostic School, Part 2, Workbook: Towards a Spiritual Science

Michael Psellos and the Method of Illumination

Henology and Ontology in Byzantine Philosophy, Their Ancient Akroamatic Mental Powers

throughout this book, abbreviated citing as: vol. 1, vol. 2, ..., vol. 6.

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Preface, with Introductory Remarks on the Status of the Question

Today, asking a Greek brought up as an Orthodox Christian: “What is wisdom?” Answer: philosopher, word means a lover of Sophia/wisdom. Objection: That is not wisdom itself. Response shifts: Athena is the goddess of wisdom. She has an owl. Sokrates was a philosopher, but he committed suicide (by drinking from the poison cup) in order to avoid life-long incarceration. Running cursorily through Greek mythology. The gods lived on Mount Olympus, but it was enshrouded by clouds so it remained invisible. Is wisdom equal to living on Olympus? We part, laughing.

Christian heritage had no say in this exchange. Wisdom pertains to this life, with the effect of keeping oneself out of trouble in the here and now. Practical wisdom is to know when to say yes and no. The very Hellenic activity of philosophy implies that there is a body of knowledge behind this, knowledge that can be taught, learned, practiced and implemented. If it is not the knowledge itself that is of the essence then it is a mental quality of alertness and attentiveness that is bestowed by dealing with such knowledge, in modern diction: an expansion of consciousness.

The ancient Greek, and Byzantine, notion of expanding and transforming consciousness, and one’s self through that experience, was called theosis (deification). In mythology, the respective person, typically a hero, “was” transformed by the gods. In the hands-on yogic practices of the ancient Greek sages (Pierre Hadot), transformation was achieved through guided exertions of the practitioner as a self-transformation. Such practices have survived to this day from time immemorial in India and other regions of the Far East. Hadot traced them unmistakably in the philosophical writings of the ancient Greeks.

That is what this book refers to as “wisdom”, but without the need, or the ability, to redo Hadot’s groundbreaking work for antiquity. For Byzantium, Hadot’s analysis cannot simply be transferred one to one, since the situation becomes more complicated in Byzantium than it had been in antiquity. In Byzantium, powerful censorship under guise of Christian love of mankind arises against the heart core of ancient wisdom teachings. The ancient wisdom teachings go underground in plain sight (most prominently but not uniquely, Dionysios Pseudo-Areopagita). Then, in the fourteenth century, in the Hesychast controversy, the spiritual contact teachings that are transformative, backed by the monks of Mount Athos, become firmly established as the mainstream, in stark contrast to the Christian church movement in the medieval west.

This movement, in my interpretation, is a millennial enactment of the spiritual cosmology described in Plato’s theory of ideas, especially of the idea of the Good, and in Aristotle’s *Metaphysics* of the Unmoved Moving. The very terminology of Byzantine, and specifically Hesychast, “essences and energies” of God is already present in Aristotle’s *Metaphysics* from the fourth century B.C. The mystic union is the key topic of the *Nikomachean Ethics*, a book that most scholars agree is actually Aristotle’s own writing (versus transcript or paraphrase such as most of his other extant writings). In book ten of the *Nikomachean Ethics*, the purpose of human life is described as a visionary participation in the thinking of God.

While Aristotle did not consider syllogistic logics, which he invented, to be a discipline of philosophy, he declared it to be a tool of thinking, together with dialectics. The Middle Ages, both in the west and the east, came to include logics as a discipline of philosophy. Functionally, that was an expansion of philosophical psychology. At the heart of the incipient philosophical reflectivity, of the mirror and the light, during the Middle Ages, moving beyond the limits of (exoteric) ancient philosophy, lay such understanding of logics not merely as a tool of thinking, but of inquiring into the individual and her and his mind, penetrating to the core of the Delphic mystery saying: knoweth thyself (gnothi seauton). We may conjecture that this was already done in antiquity in secret in the esoteric inner circles of philosophical schools, but in the Middle

Ages came to light to the participants of learned discourse, long after the philosophical schools of the ancient world had expired. The eastern spiritual wisdom that supplements this today is the teaching of energy bodies, or aura layers, of the human-mind interface, which are implied by the categorial hierarchies of logics. The “Olymp” would be, in such an esoteric or akroamatic view, the ninth and highest body or light-body, known in ancient Egypt as the akhu.

This book is part of a work in progress. I refer to my six earlier publications since 2014 that are mentioned earlier in the front matters above. From the sprawl of what now are six books, I would like to condense the main aspects and elaborate on them, with a focus on the thematic intersect of Byzantium and philosophy. The main reference is to the first of the six books mentioned above, entitled: *Byzantine Philosophy, A Framework Analysis*. This present book is an effort to reach closer toward a history of Byzantine philosophy, as far as the available source material permits today, an effort that must remain tentative at this time.

The five above-mentioned books that followed upon the *Framework Analysis* present a number of disparate aspects that are supplementary and lead the project closer to the closing of a *History* than the Framework Analysis permitted. From my memory at this time, here is a list of the major aspects:

- the second book: the nine bodies of man and their integration with logics,
- the third book: questions of Gnosis and late Byzantine Neo-Platonism, Renaissance transition, pagan survival, Euhemerism, creation of the canonical Gospels under Emperor Constantine, a chapter on Saint Symeon the New Theologian as a visionary of the Celestial Journey (Jane Baun) on par with Swedenborg,
- the fourth book: digression into aspects of spiritual science,
- the fifth book: basically, a long encyclopedia-type article on Michael Psellos, a key intellectual, and his method of illumination,
- the sixth book: review of open questions, mainly the Radical Criticism, New Testament created under Emperor Constantine, philosophical traits of Platonism and Aristotelianism, Pistis Sophia Gnosticism as authentic original Christianity, diverse questions.

Following the school of Radical Criticism in its main assumption that the New Testament was created under Emperor Constantine as a paganizing heresy, a periodization is set (as in the *Framework Analysis*) that lets the “Byzantine” development commence with Emperor Constantine in the fourth century, not later. “Byzantine receptions”, my descriptor in lieu of “Byzantine philosophy”, thus are the transformation of ancient philosophy under the socially disciplining imperial dictate of the New Testament heresy until 1453. Such a definition in its pungent salience is absent from the *Framework Analysis* since I was in 2014 not aware of the drastic and sweeping nature of the viable issues resulting from the fraud detection work of the Radical Critics, positing next to the Vatican’s Donation of Constantine forgery (first uncovered by Lorenzo Valla) the even more momentous New Testament forgery by Constantine and his minions (Radical Criticism since Erasmus).

As for mistakes in the Framework Analysis, there are many typographical errors, and, in substance, my mistake that the writings of Saint Symeon the New Theologian are not included in the Migne Patrologia Graeca series (they are included). There may well be other mistakes as well.

All six above-mentioned volumes are to a considerable part of bibliographical nature. In that respect, also, comments are appropriate to my 2014 *Framework Analysis*:

- I purposely omitted the groundbreaking works of Richard Sorabji in 2014 (vol. 1) as too specialized,
- Sorabji’s three-volume edited source reader of 2004 (Psychology, Physics, Logics and Metaphysics) of the Commentators 200 to 600 AD has major diachronic thematic connecting lines with the Spanish thesis of Alberto del Campo Echevarría, throwing open doxographical questions on the rational side,
- a particularly difficult commentator is John Philoponos on Aristotelian science, today still with uncertain interpretation (despite Sorabji/editor), requiring particular attention,

- scheduled as forthcoming is *The Cambridge Intellectual History of Byzantium*, edited by Anthony Kaldellis and Niketas Siniosoglou, over 800 pages long full with especially commissioned specialist articles,
- a number of other new and additional titles with contributing aspects.

Hadot, Pierre; *Exercices spirituels e philosophie antique*; Paris 1981

The Bibliographical Reduction of this Book

In order to write this book, a book at best of a tentative nature for outlining paths of writing a “history of Byzantine philosophy”, I undertook a bibliographical reduction. Further to my earlier writings, I rely here mainly on the following works that are both modern and of a more summary character, none of them claiming to be final renditions of the subject matter of a history of Byzantine philosophy.

While compiling this reduction list, I noticed that something like a not fully reducible specialization is required for chapter 6 (The Byzantine Transformations of Neoplatonism). It is possible that such a chapter can capture the entire development in nuce, not least since Neoplatonism was there at the start and at the end of Byzantium and furtively survived through the middle by morphing, generating elusive Michael Psellos as the overall dean. Neoplatonism is also “one of the fastest growing areas of research in ancient philosophy”, according to the 2014 *Routledge Handbook*. Even the *Handbook* does not approach the issue of Byzantine continuity of the school. In vol. 1, I proposed a continuity after the official closing of the school by Justinian from Damaskios to Dionysios (Pseudo-)Areopagita, who doubtlessly also was Neoplatonically inclined. Later Neoplatonists were Michael Psellos and, at the end of Byzantium, George Gemistos Plethon. Branches of the influential school into the Islamic world also need to be considered. If this is to be treated in one chapter it may become a rather long chapter, and complex.

Allen, Pauline; Neil, Bronwen (editors); *The Oxford Handbook of Maximus the Confessor*; New York 2015

Bidén, Börje; Ierodiakonou, Katerina (editors); *The Many Faces of Byzantine Philosophy*; The Norwegian Institute at Athens 2012

Campo Echevarría, Alberto del; *La teoría Platónica de las ideas en Bizancio (ss. V-XI): Principios, desarrollos e inversión final de la ontología clásica* [Spanish: The Platonic Theory of Ideas in Byzantium (centuries V-XI): Principles, Development and Final Version of Classical Ontology]; Madrid 2010

-----; *La teoría platónica de las Ideas en Bizancio (ss. IX-XI)*; Madrid 2012

Digester, Elizabeth DePalma; *A Threat to Public Piety, Christians, Platonists, and the Great Persecution*; Ithaca 2012

Donini, Pierluigi; *Commentary and Tradition, Aristotelianism, Platonism, and Post-Hellenic Philosophy*; edited by Mauro Bonazzi; Berlin, New York 2011 (Italian)

Dvornik, Francis; *The Photian Schism, History and Legend*; Cambridge 1948, reprinted 1970

Fortna, Robert Tomson; *The Fourth Gospel and Its Predecessor, From Narrative Source to Present Gospel*; Minneapolis 2007

Fyrigos, Antonis; *Introduzione alla filosofia patristica e bizantina (Dalle origini dell'era cristiana alle lotte iconoclastiche)* (Italian: Introduction to Patristic and Byzantine Philosophy, etc.), Pontificia Università Gregoriana, Facoltà di Filosofia; 3rd edition, Rome 2007

Greatrex, Geoffrey; et al. (editors); *Shifting Genres in Late Antiquity*; Farnham, Burlington 2015

Helmig, Christoph; *Forms and Concepts, Concept Formation in the Platonic Tradition*; Berlin, Boston 2012

Hergenröther, Josef.; *Photius, Patriarch von Constantinopel. Sein Leben, seine Schriften, und das griechische Schisma. Nach handschriftlichen und gedruckten Quellen* (German: Photius, Patriarch of Constantinople, His Life, His Writings, and the Greek Schism. After handwritten and printed Sources); Regensburg, volumes 1, 2 (1867), volume 3 (1869)

Hill, Charles E.; *The Johannine Corpus in the Early Church*, New York 2004

Ierodiakonou, Katerina (editor); *Byzantine Philosophy and its Ancient Sources*; New York 2002

- Kaldellis, Anthony; *Hellenism in Byzantium, The Transformations of Greek Identity and the Reception of the Classical Tradition*; New York 2007
- Kaldellis, Anthony; Siniossoglou, Niketas (editors); *The Cambridge Intellectual History of Byzantium*; forthcoming
- Kanagaraj, Jeyaseelan Joseph; *'Mysticism' in the Gospel of John: an inquiry into the background of John in Jewish mysticism*; Durham E-Theses 1995; <http://etheses.dur.ac.uk/1032/>
- Kapriev, Georgi; *Philosophie in Byzanz* [German: Philosophy in Byzantium]; Würzburg 2005
- Louth, Andrew; *St John Damascene*; Oxford 2002
- Лурье, В.М.; *История Византийской философии, Библиотека духовной науки* (Russian: History of Byzantine Philosophy, A Formative Period); Axiôma 2006
- Manor, T. Scott; *Epiphanius' Alogi and the Johannine Controversy, A Reassessment of Early Ecclesial Opposition to the Johannine Corpus*; Leiden, Boston 2016
- Mburu, Elizabeth W.; *Qumran and the Origins of Johannine Language and Symbolism*; New York 2010
- Meyendorff, John; *Byzantine Hesychasm: historical, theological and social problems, Collected Studies*; London 1974
- Parry, Ken (editor); *The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Patristics*; Chichester 2015
- Podskalsky, Gerhard; *Von Photios zu Bessarion, der Vorrang humanistisch geprägter Theologie in Byzanz und deren bleibende Bedeutung* [German: From Photios to Bessarion, the Primacy of Humanistically Based Theology in Byzantium and its Enduring Importance]; Wiesbaden 2003
- Pollard, T. E.; *Johannine Christology and the Early Church*; Cambridge 1970
- Rigo, Antonio; et al. (editors); *Byzantine Theology and its Philosophical Background*; Turnout 2011
- Sabo, Theodore; *The Proto-Hesychasts: Origins of mysticism in the Eastern Church*; Thesis, North-Western University, May 2012, pdf online
- Schibille, Nadine; *Hagia Sophia and the Byzantine Aesthetic Experience*; Farnham, Burlington 2014
- Simmons, Michael Bland; *Universal Salvation in Late Antiquity, Porphyry of Tyre and the Pagan-Christian Debate*; New York 2015
- Sorabji, Richard (editor); *Aristotle Transformed, The Ancient Commentators and Their Influence*; Ithaca 1990
- (editor); *Philoponus and the Rejection of Aristotelian Science*; 2nd edition, London 2010
- ; 400 Years of Transition, The Philosophy of the Commentators, 200-600 AD, A Sourcebook; London 2012; volume 1, Psychology (with Ethics and Religion); volume 2, Physics; volume 3, Logic and Metaphysics (originally 2004)
- Strecker, Georg; *Theology of the New Testament*; German Edition edited and completed by Friedrich Wilhelm Horn; Translated by M. Eugene Boring; Berlin etc. 2000
- Strezova, Anita; *Hesychasm and Art, The Appearance of New Iconographic Trends in Byzantine and Slavic Lands in the 14th and 15th Centuries*; Canberra 2014
- Stroumsa, Guy G.; *The Making of the Abrahamic Religions in Late Antiquity*; New York 2015
- Taivane, Elizabete; *Dimensions of Mystical Anthropology of the XX Century: Hesychasm and Tibetan Buddhism Compared*; PhD Thesis, University of Latvia, Riga 2005
- Todorović, Uroš T.; *Transcendental Byzantine Body. Reading Dionysius the Pseudo-Areopagite, Gregory of Nyssa and Plotinus in the Unfolded Marble Panels of Hagia Sophia*; in: Mikonja Knežević (editor); *The Ways of Byzantine Philosophy*; Alhambra (California) 2015, pp. 197-225 + 20 pages of colour picture plates

For Chapter 06 The Byzantine Transformations of Neoplatonism:

- Ahbel-Rappe, Sara; *Damascius' Problems and Solutions Concerning First Principles*; New York 2010

- Becker, Matthias; *Porphyrios, Contra Christianos, Neue Sammlung der Fragmente, Testimonien und Dubia mit Einleitung, Übersetzung und Anmerkungen*; Berlin, Boston 2016
- Bigg, Charles; *The Christian Platonists of Alexandria, Being the Bampton Lectures of the Year 1886*; Oxford 1913
- Biriukov, Dmitry; *Hierarchies of Beings in the Patristic Thought, Gregory of Nyssa and Dionysius the Areopagite*; in: Mikonja Knežević (editor); *The Ways of Byzantine Philosophy*; Alhambra (California) 2015, pp. 71-88
- Esposito, Lisa Marie; *Pseudo-Dionysius, A Philosophical Study of Certain Hellenic Sources*; PhD Thesis, University of Toronto, 1997
- Gersh, Stephen (editor); *Interpreting Proclus, From Antiquity to the Renaissance*; Cambridge 2014
- Hladký, Vojtěch; *The Philosophy of Gemistos Plethon, Platonism in Late Byzantium, between Hellenism and Orthodoxy*; Farnham, Burlington 2014
- MacMullen, Ramsay; *Christianity and Paganism in the Fourth to Eighth Centuries*; New Haven, London 1997
- Majercik, R.; *Chaldean Triads in Neoplatonic Exegesis, Some Reconsiderations*; in: *The Classical Quarterly*, New Series, volume 51, issue 1, 2001, pp. 265-296
- (editor); *Byzantine Perspectives on Neoplatonism*; Boston, Berlin 2017
- Newell, Philip Rutherford; *Plotinus and the development of Neoplatonism*; PhD Thesis, Boston University 1955, <http://hdl.handle.net/2144/6834>
- O'Neill, Timothy Michael; *Ideography and Chinese Language Theory, A History*; Berlin, Boston 2016
- Perl, Eric D.; *Theophany, The Neoplatonic Philosophy of Dionysios the Areopagite*; Albany 2007
- Remes, Pauliina; *Neoplatonism*; Stocksfield 2008
- Remes, Pauliina; Slaveva-Griffin, Svetla (editors); *The Routledge Handbook of Neoplatonism*; Abingdon, New York 2014
- Shaw, Gregory; *Theurgy and the Soul, The Neoplatonism of Iamblichus*; University Park, Pennsylvania 1995
- Siniosoglou, Niketas; *Radical Platonism in Byzantium, Illumination and Utopia in Gemistos Plethon*; Cambridge 2011
- Wear, Sarah Klitenic; Dillon, John; *Dionysius the Areopagite and the Neoplatonist Tradition*; Aldershot, Burlington 2007
- Woodhouse, C. M.; *George Gemistos Plethon, The Last of the Hellenes*; Oxford 1986

Bibliographically, the later period is still difficult, or near impossible, to put together, in any standard “history” fashion, especially without the Russian literature. Like in most of this book, an experimental approach is taken. There are some additional citations in the chapters.

I considered chapters on “Byzantine Legal Philosophy” and “Byzantine Aesthetic Theory”, left unwritten:

1. Byzantine legal philosophy doubtlessly existed on a high intellectual level. It was, however, a jurist’s philosophy bound in the profession, not a philosopher’s philosophy of right. The key concept is the “*ius naturae*” (natural law) as defined and discussed in Justinian’s *corpus iuris civilis* compendium of Roman law. Not the ancient philosophical theories of natural law, and not Cicero’s stoic legal philosophy, but this concept as part of compiled Roman law is the proper starting point for all subsequent systems of natural law and structuring codified law with syllogistic logics as the hallmark of the Roman statutory law tradition. See:

Scattola, Merio; *Das Naturrecht vor dem Naturrecht, Zur Geschichte des *ius naturae* im 16. Jahrhundert* [German: Natural Law Before Natural Law, Towards a History of ‘*ius naturae*’ in the 16th Century]; Tübingen 1999, pp. 112 sqq.

The Springer publisher series *A Treatise of Legal Philosophy and General Jurisprudence*, volumes 6 and 7, makes reference to Byzantium but does not mention teachings or literature that would have placed a focus on natural law in Byzantium. Justinian's Byzantine codification of Roman law became the subject of a legal science only in medieval Italy under the influence of western scholasticism, even though Roman lawyers had systems of legal interpretation.

We still need a "new history of Byzantine law" (Alexander Kazhdan) before it might become possible to evaluate the issue further. In social practice, at least in the earlier centuries, Byzantine/Roman society remained strongly legalistic and bound by laws. There were considerations about the intersect between law and religion. There were no emancipatory speculations about "divine law" such as in the west, particularly in Thomism. An explanation may be that Byzantines sought participation not so much through legal rights as through their dominant spiritual orientation, which may, once again, strike us as quite unusual.

2. For Byzantine aesthetic theory, consult the monograph:

Mariev, Sergei; *Ästhetische Theorien in Byzanz* [German: Aesthetic Theories in Byzantium]; Habilitationsschrift; Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München 2013

Introduction

“Byzantine philosophy” is an emerging scholarly subject. It is not yet possible to write anything close to an authoritative “History of” for this field today, for reasons of source situation, and also, because the thinkers are often hard to assess for us. One way is to “blog” this subject, not on the internet, but in a succession of texts, to let the significant problems, pitfalls, and white spots on the mind map play out. That seems to be the method that has chosen me (see in Preface).

“Byzantine philosophy” was a set of handwritten Greek manuscripts from the early fourth century A.D. (not all agree on such an early start for periodization, or, influentially, would propose a flowing start extended over time in late antiquity) until May 1453 (fall of Constantinople to the Ottoman Empire). Towards the end, there was an incursion of Latin as a language, also. Greek manuscripts that were written earlier but were carried forward in libraries into the Byzantine era shall be counted in. After 1453, one would best speak of “Post-Byzantine philosophy”, mainly in the Orthodox countries, to this day. The territory was that of the Roman empire (with the west collapsing in the fifth century) and its fringes, with a notable exception in Ireland (John Scotus Eriugena, an important thinker of the Middle Ages, tyologically an orphan but closest to Byzantine thought). Byzantine philosophy was indigenous, mostly. This included an array of indigenous ethnic traditions of the eastern Roman empire (Hellenic, mainly, with Egyptian, Jewish, Christian), but also a cultural dialogue with the Arab and Iranian neighbours, a rather one-sided cultural flow to the west after the fall of the western half of the empire, and in the late Byzantine centuries, a partial reception of Latin Thomism and cautious opening to other western Latin views.

Much of this set of manuscripts is, today, lost or in organizational disarray. After centuries of what one may characterize as disgust with the little known subjects dealt with in the manuscript set, scholarship in the west, starting with Vasilios Tatakis writing in a book in French,

Tatakis, Basile; *La philosophie byzantine*, Paris 1949, translated into Spanish, Greek, English, Romanian

has discovered the manuscript set as a new field for research, by now, with something like an emerging core consensus in the phase of formation, including a number of divergent preferences and approaches around such an emerging core in matters of: periodization, inclusion/exclusion of authors (the inclusion notion seems to be dominant), who were the key players, recognition and edition of texts, key concepts and their meaning, issues of method and interpretation, issues of classification, issues of chronology, with many open questions and as of today no end in sight.

For this interested in the short history of this historiography, here is a French review of the 1949 book by Tatakis:

Moreau, Joseph; *Basile Tatakis. – La philosophie byzantine (etc.)* (book review, French); in: *Revue philosophique de la France et de l'étranger*, volume 141, year: 1951, pp. 584-586

The reviewer comments briefly on the then existing scholarly disinterest in the subject and points out why Émile Bréhier, an eminent French scholar of his time, nonetheless asked a young talent, Tatakis, to write such a book. The reviewer states the main motive for interest in Byzantine philosophy as follows (my translation):

“Le livre de M. Tasakis montre, au contraire, que, dans le domaine de la pensée, Byzance a su créer une forme originale de spiritualité, distincte de celle de l'Occident catholique, et qui a trouvé son expression dans l'orthodoxie grecque. Cette forme de la pensée chrétienne devint l'éducatrice du monde grec et slave; la Russie des tsars est l'héritière moderne de / Byzance, dont l'âme vit encore chez des écrivains et des penseurs tels que Dostoïevsky ou Berdiaeff.” (p. 584 f.)

“Tasakis' book shows, on the contrary, that Byzantium, in the field of thought, has been able to create an original form of spirituality distinct from that of the Catholic west, and which has found its expression in Greek Orthodoxy. This form of Christian thought became the educator of the Greek and Slavic world; Russia of the Tsars is the modern heiress of Byzantium, whose soul still lives among writers and thinkers such as Dostoyevsky or Berdiaeff.”

Publications followed. A landmark was the publication of a massive bibliography:

Benakis, Linos G.; *Bibliographie byzantine, IV, philosophie; bibliographie internationale sur la philosophie byzantine (1949-1990)*; in: *Bibliographie byzantine, Publications des byzantinistes grecs (1975-1990)*, publié à l'occasion du XVIIIe Congrès International d'Études Byzantines (Moscou, 1991); Association internationale des Études byzantines, Comité hellénique des Études byzantines; Athens 1991; pp. 319-377

The absence of all Russian and other Slavic language publications cuts out a major segment of the then existing publications on the subject, however. The situation today is such that the totality of all existing publications can only be evaluated by a multi-lingual international team (Greek, Latin, Russian, Serbian, Romanian, Bulgarian, Italian, French, English, German, Spanish publications, no claim to completeness). The Russian “gray” literature, as far as I have seen summaries on the internet, is large and draws from long-standing detailed Orthodox doxographical knowledge from centuries of clerical source readings. That is not well accessible to research in the west, not least for language constraints, but also for lack of a central library for this, even given Dumbarton Oaks. A recent study that begins shining a light into that is by Robert Romanchuk (see in *Bibliographic Reduction* above). More notes on our present basic incompleteness despite a large volume of information are in my vol. 1.

Another absence is that of a key document of Byzantine philosophy, namely the main cathedral of the eastern empire, the Hagia Sophia in today's Istanbul, erected under emperor Justinian. This was mentioned as a wisdom source accessible to exegesis in my vol. 1, using the dissertation of Nadine Schibille. That has been published in book form (see in *Bibliographic Reduction* above, together with Uroš T. Todorović). I have nothing basic to add to that so I refer to my passage in vol. 1, pp. 16-18.

As is appropriate for a nascent field (something a bit prior to an emerging field), it found early reviewers of the field (the first being Linos Benakis 1971 in Greek), among which are mentioned here as examples:

Oehler, Klaus; *Die byzantinische Philosophie*; in: Guttorm Fløistad; Raymond Klibansky (editors); *Philosophie et science au Moyen Âge/ Philosophy and Science in the Middle Ages*; Dordrecht 1990, pp. 639-649

Nikolaou, Theodor; *Grundlegende Gedanken über die byzantinische Philosophie*; in: *Byzantine*, volume 9, Thessaloniki 1977, pp. 168-186

These thoughtful early field reviews merit attention still today as early confrontations with a topic of “extraordinary complexity” (Klaus Oehler). They don't review any particular text, but analyze the new field of

research itself, what it is, is not, and can be, what one can expect from it, what is its starting time frame (for Nikolaou, a time span starting with Philo of Alexandria the philosophical OT exegete). A methodical issue in these early field reviews is the appropriate weight that should be assigned to the Patristic-Orthodox traditional viewpoint that, for example, Tatakis (especially in his later writings) and Benakis adhere to. The emerging core consensus of western scholarship does not genuinely extend to this. That leaves a situation of two different basic viewpoints, one sacred, the other secular, a situation that is unresolved and has not found a common platform. It is to my mind self-evident that the bulk of Byzantine wisdom writing has a dominant sacred attitude, including stylistically and “between-the-lines” connotationally. That original sacred attitude does not register well with the western scholarly secular approach, and is in the process of being filtered out by using the secular approach. I find that unfortunate since the object of study is thereby being altered strongly at the stylistic and connotational levels that are of the essence for Byzantine philosophy. I see no remedy at hand for that issue. One subject of this book is that in late antiquity where were several sacred attitudes that were quite forcibly merged. To track that movement, at least, requires attentive awareness of the issue, which I find is a key issue in tracing shift of ideas. An “attitude” in this purview might be paraphrased as a sacred mentality, bringing this under the methodology of the French Annales school of mentality history.

The emerging secular core consensus of western scholarship today finds its articulation in particular in certain short publications, including: encyclopedia articles, reviews and articles in journals, and online media of comparable brevity. Such synthetic writeups are at all times necessary for interested readers of the general public, scholars specialized in neighbouring fields, and to inform specialists in the field itself of what the bigger picture looks like at a given time. Ideally, what can be given here is a grid for locating parts in a larger whole, synchronic cross-connections emerging in the field, and for mapping the large-scale diachronic drifts of thought in history. Not least, such synthetic writeups keep track of the progress in achieving a clear focus of the whole elephant, from a starting point of the diffuse leaving many things unsaid, to an ideal, future, end point of synthesizable full clarity in every issue, leaving nothing unsaid. By such criteria, progress has already come in good stride. The recent summaries show that the range of interests has broadened significantly as compared with the 1951 review of Tatakis’ seminal 1949 book. A field of research in its own right has been born.

The greatest individual contribution to the birth of the new field is the lifetime work of the eminent researcher, Professor Linos G. Benakis, born 1928 in Korfu. Benakis’ lifetime research, following the sacred viewpoint, is acknowledged by:

Terezis, Christos; *Questioning ... Linos Benakis*; in: Bochumer Philosophisches Jahrbuch für Antike und Mittelalter, volume 17, 2014, pp. 251-259

His understanding of Byzantine philosophy counterbalances any tendencies of a mere positivistic exposition of “authors” or “writings”. His texts are pervaded by a timeless appreciation, I would like to say, veneration, of the values beyond and above mere noncommittal intellectuality that the great Byzantine sages have left to us.

Benakis, Linos G.; *Philosophy and Theology in Byzantium*; in: European Journal of Science and Theology, volume 1, issue 3, September 2005, pp. 1-3

-----; *Byzantine Philosophy, An Introductory Approach*; LAP Lambert Academic Publishing (2017-02-16)

Bidén, Börje; *Philosophy, Byzantine*; article in: The Encyclopedia of Ancient History; published online: 26 Oct 2012; DOI: 10.1002/9781444338386.wbeah03192

Bidén, Börje; Ierodiakonou, Katerina; *Greek Philosophy*; in: John Marenbon (editor); The Oxford Handbook of Medieval Philosophy; New York 2012, pp. 29-57

Gerogiorgakis, Stamatis; [German review of] *Georgi Kapriev, Philosophie in Byzanz (etc.)*; in: *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, volume 100, issue 1, 2007, II. Abteilung, pp. 223-225

Ierodiakonou, Katerina; article: *Byzantine Philosophy*; in: Donald M. Borchert (editor in chief); *Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 2nd edition, Farmington Hills 2006, volume 1, pp. 786-790 (2005)

-----; *Byzantine philosophy revisited (a decade after)*; 2016-03-31 (2012 book chapter); <https://digitalt.uib.no/>

Kaldellis, Anthony; *Byzantine philosophy inside and out: Orthodoxy and dissidence in counterpoint*; 2016-03-31 (2012 book chapter); <https://digitalt.uib.no/>

Manolovna, Divna; [review of] *Börje Bydén, Katerina Ierodiakonou (ed.), The Many Faces of Byzantine Philosophy. (etc.)*; <http://bmcr.brynmawr.edu/2014/2014-01-60.html>

Viglas, Katelis; *A Historical Outline of Byzantine Philosophy and Its Basic Subjects*; pdf (2006), online at http://static.sdu.dk/mediafiles/Files/Om_SDU/Institutter/Ifpr/rescogitans/vol3/RC%20%20%20Katelis.pdf

The following introductory outline is derived by contrast from these ten carefully documents to indicate the emerging core consensus as seen by the respective authors. This will enable the general reader to recognize where my book explores paths that lead outside and beyond the settling grid.

Overall, I try to use a “main ideas” approach not so much of individual authors (with a certain exception for Michael Psellos, and, in this book, also Photios, not counting St. Gregory Palamas here since Hesychasm is a collective development); but main ideas of the entire field. In chapter 1, I follow the Radical Criticism of the Dutch school, a venue that has not yet been explored in its vast consequences for the history of Byzantine philosophy. My bibliographical and argumentative approach is laid down in earlier vols. I am not arguing the point. It has good closure for those willing to follow the rational critique to its end. My lead interests for the “main ideas” approach are: the Johannine turn, the Tabor light (in vol. 1), logics in its relation to the human nine-body system (in vol. 2), and, new in this present book, the great product of the entire Byzantine millennium (of 1100 some years): humanism as the valuable end result of the entire transformative thought and archetype morph of Byzantium (see in chapter 12 below, partly following Gerhard Podskalsky S.J.). Those are leads of my own interest that will not be reflected in the following introductory outline.

Let me not forget to mention my exegesis of the four canonical Gospels as an esoteric (akroamatic, versus exoteric) exposition of the Four Forces of Creation. That, too, will not be reflected in the following introductory outline. I believe it, however, to be integral to the starting point of the Byzantine intellectual development through the four Gospels of emperor Constantine, and to be linked inextricably with the Johannine turn in its so far unrecognized depths.

With the emerging modern western scholarly core consensus concerning a historical view of the Byzantine achievements of the intellect and of wisdom, one still needs to be mindful that the Byzantines held their own views, implicitly, about historicism. See:

Kaldellis, Anthony; *Historicism in Byzantine Thought and Literature*; in: *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, volume 61, 2007, pp. 1-24

To sum up my view gained over years: Chronologically, the intellectual history of Byzantium begins with a crisis of empire, and its solution through creating four Platonic Gospels with the New Testament (NT) as “Christian”, the charismatic brand label of the solution. (chapter 1) From the turn from the fifth to the sixth century A.D., the anonymous Dionysios the Areopagite gave to the further development of Byzantine theology a methodology that is widely accepted to be Neoplatonic. (chapter 6) The peak development in the Hesychast Controversy hinged on energy/essence arguments from book lambda of Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*. (chapters 11, 12) *Theology* was thereby exposed as a logical fallacy. *Humanism* was born.

The best analysis of the Byzantine development and its curative insights comes from

Dourley, John P.; *The Illness That We Are, A Jungian Critique of Christianity*; Toronto 1984

It provides an illustration of the adage that truth hurts. Man's "fall" from Eden (Atlantis and Lemuria) was mental. It takes a shrink's eye to cut through the BS and outright sick behaviour that was Byzantium, and further, to recognize the tremendous progress toward betterment the mental illness made, which progress was also Byzantium. While the remarks of the book are made for Christianity in general, the key issues, so far hidden but now coming in the open, are all assembled together in the Byzantine topics. In this regard, "wisdom" is healing and restoration of the divine human core, man's divinity lost and found.

"Philosophy", then, is a notation of wisdom. It is eminently difficult to read. In the curative mass of wisdom there is mass enlightenment – mukti, liberation from spiritual ignorance, ignorance being the root cause of human suffering and sorrow. It is individually transformative. It can, moreover, be transformative in societal ways. Late antiquity reached a point, through the original Jesus movement, at which the illiterate masses found themselves yearning for spiritual enlightenment. That was a challenge to the old elite forms of societally restricted enlightenment, in late antiquity: a challenge to the Neoplatonic school, to give a name. Those two, the old and the new, are still playing out today, with the balance, gradually but accelerating, shifting away from the restrictions and towards mass enlightenment. That is, overall, where planetary power is lodged. Like in the overall model, the Byzantine development from early fourth century A.D. to 1453 was a give and take, changing irreversibly the landscape of civilization. At the end, Byzantium gave its legacy away.

The critical wedge, as in Muslim countries, and as in the west, was to acquire literacy in syllogistic logics based on Aristotle. Unlike in the west and in Muslim countries, the Hellenic spirit in Byzantium actually followed this drive to the end, virtually burning up the fallacious and presumptive notion of "theology", and retaining the ancient opening of man to the spiritual realms where human souls originated and have their home.

To this day, there is a great disconnect not only in the west about the spiritual nature of man. It is not man's "true" nature but is one of man's two natures. The other nature is the Darwinian monkey, which is but a half-truth in spiritual terms, and a full failure in terms of logics-directed science free of beliefs (not science unreasonably chasing specious alleged evidence without result for 150 years). Today, it is reputed science as a morph of religion that is endangered by logics. The basic schematic thus has not changed. The picture hanger remains elite authority, jeopardized by its societal crumbling via mass dissemination of critical knowledge; that is a social historian's angle of viewing it. That also delineates the key policies of heresiology in Byzantium and beyond. Mass stultification is mostly mass dyslogics fostered by willful and arbitrary inconsistencies.

If Byzantium is notable for its social history of logics, the antagonist also needs to be noted. That is social history of dyslogics. The intellectual history of Byzantium would be incomplete in an essential point without reserving a prominent place for the phenomenon of dyslogics and its intelligently guiding intentions.

The social history of logics actually is a logics war. The topic is not unknown but usually comes under the caption of a "spiritual war". A spiritual war is an assumption that the historian can practically not match with documentation. A "logics war" is a fragment of a possible spiritual war that can be documented.

The Vatican's "filioque" is possibly part of a perennial spiritual war between Good and evil. What can be documented, however, is that the issue raised by the Vatican is dyslogical in the sense that it evades logics. The entire "Trinity" theology evades logics. That is the reserve domain where theologians claim the privilege of "divine revelation", which may raise the suspicion of intellectual dishonesty.

Islam is an early organized branch-off from Byzantine theology, merging with the ancient Arabic cult of a monostheistic being Allah, that never received the "Trinity", and continues to this day without a Trinity in any form.

It is high time to end the Trinity fraud of organized Christian religions, and to end the discrimination of women in organized religions.

May your eyes be opened to the deceptions of the world, and of yourself, so you may stop foolishly worshipping them.

The valuable part of Byzantine philosophy shows that logics is revelation. It takes place in a spiritually awakening human. It cannot be external, coming from someone else, nor can it come by rumor, nor by worship, nor by reading scripture.

Logics is mental iconoclasm. It smashes authority and lies to the extent that they sneak upon you in disguises. The pre-logical mind is controlled by a flow of images. Logics diagnoses those images and dissolves them into their components, which are non-images, namely, desires. The desires arise in your physical body. They are part of your lower self.

The seemingly very difficult spiritual connection with your dedicated Higher Self (your guardian angel, residing in a higher world) is greatly assisted by syllogistic logics. Syllogistic logics is not merely a tool to think straight. It is a tool of mystical contact with positive lightful intelligence. That wipes darkness and deceptions away. That is a main service of the Fourth Force, Holy Spirit, Connecting Force of Divine Love.

The novelty of dealing with Byzantine philosophy is this. It is pre-ancient Atlantean and Lemurian knowledge for our times. It is a seed from which a new, better, and kinder world can grow.

Logics, together with dialectics, is thus the spiritual unveiling of the Divine Will, or Imperative of the Good, the True, and the Beautiful. Aristotle/Philoponos/Hesychasm et al. conceived this under the slightly more general notion of “divine energies” after a key distinction in Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*. Plato saw with his intellect the Idea of the Good. Aristotle saw the Idea of the True. The early Byzantines, preceding Immanuel Kant (his third Critique) by fourteen centuries, the Idea of the Beautiful (in the Johannine turn). The Idea of the Beautiful traditionally is the Divine Glory of God, Divine Love emanating to man, in the Four Forces the Fourth. On the website of Dumbarton Oaks, a report mentions the connection of logic and icons (Byzantine sacred images) as favouring each other, a connection that seems strange but is explained by this, <https://www.doaks.org/research/support-for-research/fellowships/reports/2014-2015/erismann>

“Studying Aristotelian Logic in Ninth-Century Byzantium

Christophe Erismann, Université de Lausanne, Fellow 2014–2015, Spring

My fellowship at Dumbarton Oaks allowed me to study carefully two fascinating examples of the use of Aristotelian logic in ninth-century Byzantine theological debates. This research was greatly facilitated by the exceptional quality of the bibliographical resources available at Dumbarton Oaks and by the extraordinary commitment of the permanent staff.

The first inquiry focused on the discussion of the particularity versus universality of the humanity of Christ, which is addressed both by Theodore the Stoudite, who defends universal humanity, and by Patriarch Photios, who rejects it. The study of this problem allows us to reconstruct both authors’ theories of universals, and to show how their solutions to a theological question are determined by their understanding of the ontological status of universal entities. The second study dealt with the use of the Aristotelian category of relatives (*pros ti*) in the iconoclastic crisis. As has been established by Paul Alexander, the last phase of the debate on icon worship is characterized by a frequent use of Aristotelian logical concepts in the works of authors favorable to icons, such as Patriarch Nikephoros of Constantinople, Metrophanes of Smyrna, and Theodore the Stoudite. The image and its model are analyzed in terms of Aristotelian relatives. This generates highly interesting and innovative considerations about the

simultaneity by nature as a property of relatives. These two inquiries have confirmed that, in order to understand the development of logic in ninth-century Byzantium, the study of theological writings - in addition to philosophical ones - is crucial.”

The hotly disputed theology of images (two periods of iconoclasm in Byzantium, c.726-787, and 814-842, tantamount to an early civil war) sits in the middle of this topical hotspot. The background is non-sensate, however; it is logical. To use a simplification, it rides piggy-back on the sensate basis of icons, but is in the higher levels of the mind. Another user of Aristotelian logical concepts favourable to icons was Photios, who it is otherwise not possible to understand, and who is currently not understood.

The sacred philosopher (“theologian”, just a word) who opened this can, paralleling medieval logification of law (see above, near the end of Bibliographical Reduction) was the polymath St. John Damascene in the eighth century (chapter 4), especially in his *Fountain of Wisdom*. The key issue was the making of a graven image of God, violating basics of the OT, in form of the fraudulent “Trinity” as mental visual atheism. That is a dyslogic stultificatory heresy of the Church against Plato, Aristotle and the Gnosticism of the original Jesus movement that was smashed by the empire under guise of saving and organizing it, the price for saving the empire from a premature dawn of the light of Truth. But this polemic, properly, belongs, in a rationalized analytical form, in the book proper. It is practically the nutshell of this book.

Barlaam of Calabria and St. Gregory Palamas wrangled over difficult issues of human abilities pertaining to God/Source Existence Level over 700 years ago. We have great difficulties comprehending it. (Ask three year olds. One of them might be able to explain, somehow.) Today, in quantum physics, there is a parallel. It is as difficult to comprehend. The notional form is that of the complex and the simplex. Everything physics is vibration. Thought form is that gravitation is vibration. Physicists do not accept that as a hypothesis but require proof through experiment. That is fallacious, methodologically. Further, if everything in physics is vibration (with a double particle nature, also), then it is self-evident that there is a medium of the vibrations. Traditional knowledge calls that the ether. Physicists are horrified. That is fallacious, fundamentally.

There is an emotional and psychological barrier against the Truth. The issue of the aether, which we find in medieval proto-physics including the formational dynamics in Byzantium, is a Shibboleth for spiritual blindness, just as the Jesus prayer of Hesychasm was a Shibboleth for spiritual blindness in the Hesychast Controversy with its main contenders, Barlaam of Calabria and St. Gregory Palamas. The lie of a “Trinity” is another such Shibboleth for spiritual blindness. The Church would only accept those who are spiritually blind. Aristotle with the logics that he gifted to the world is in the midst. Without logics, these three examples just mentioned would have no issue. That explains a basic tension of Byzantine wisdom trajectories.

In the ground-breaking research of the first decades after Vasilios Tatakis’ seminal book, Klaus Oehler published an article about Aristotle in Byzantium, making clear how difficult the source situation makes it to write anything at all about the subject:

Oehler, Klaus; *Aristotle in Byzantium*; in: Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies, volume 5, issue 2 (1964), pp. 133-146, <http://grbs.library.duke.edu/article/view/11951>

He describes the revival of the Lyceum and the organization of Aristotle’s works by Andronikus of Rhodes in the first century B.C. From that time, the Aristotelian corpus as we know it was available. A commentarial school tradition began which never entirely broke off any more. I have read estimates that by far the most philosophical commentaries that Byzantines left are to text of this corpus. By the recent closing of a lacuna, the ancient reception of Aristotle is now covered in well accessible form in:

Falcon, Andrea (editor); *Brill’s Companion to the Reception of Aristotle in Antiquity*; Leiden 2016

In the main part of his article, Oehler recites the history of the Aristotelian commentators in Byzantium, which he calls “development of Aristotelian scholarship”. On p. 240, he writes:

“The commentaries of the Byzantines deserve our attention for various reasons, of which I shall mention two. In the first place the theologians of the Greek Middle Ages for the most part did not go back to the ancient Greek philosophers themselves when they developed their doctrines, but instead to the commentaries and anthologies made during the Christian era. There were important exceptions, however. Secondly, these commentaries are mostly records of classroom activities and therefore they constitute valuable sources for our knowledge of the methods of philosophical instruction in that age. The simultaneous existence of commentaries in the form of copies of lectures and in the form of copies of dialogues reflects two different types of instruction, which have their modern parallels in lectures and seminars. Analysis of the commentaries sometimes enables us to see the schemata on which the structure of the lessons was based.”

That gives us an icon of Byzantine philosophy, as indeed we find as an illuminating miniature in the Skylitzes Matritensis (fol. 134 r.). That is how Byzantine philosophy looked in its going concern.

Oehler follows this explanation by turning to the use that Byzantine theologians made of Aristotle. Among the philosophers who were open to the philosophers, Plato was favoured. In the Antiochene school, however, Plato was given second place behind Aristotle. This happened at the time of Diodorus of Tarsus, the teacher of John Chrysostomos and Theodore of Mopsuestia. (p. 141) Oehler mentions the Aristotelianism of the monk Leontios of Byzantium who flourished in the first half of the sixth century (p. 142) Any simplicity of this view is gone today (Georgi Kapriev, 2005 German book, pp. 39 sq.; Matthias Gockel; *A Dubious Christological Formula? Leontius of Byzantium and the anhypostasis-enhypostasis Theory*; in: Journal of Theological Studies, NS, volume 51, part 2, October 2000, pp. 515-532). The complexities are creative design reaching out for the Beautiful, is my impression, i.e., they are applied conceptual aesthetics of the Glory.

“Aristotelianism as Leontius conceived of it had very little to do with the historical Aristotle. Of the works of Aristotle Leontius knew only the *Categories*, and these he knew through the medium of Neoplatonic commentaries. He was, however, familiar also with a few Aristotelian formulas other than those which could he found in the *Categories*, most likely through his readings of the Fathers, to whom such formulas had been known since the time of Clement of Alexandria.” (Oehler, *supra*)

To my mind, this was a natural development as long as the hand of Church/Empire censorship was stayed. Maximus the Confessor adopted Leontius’ terminology in the field of Christology; and Maximus was also strongly influenced by Dionysios the (Pseudo-)Areopagite for his exegesis of the (Pseudo-)Gospels, (Pseudo-) St. Paul of Tarsus and the (Pseudo-)NT. The two iconoclastic periods of the spiritual warfare then drove the theologians hard to get to the bottom of the issues, i.e., drove them to Aristotelian preciseness.

I am ending this introduction, but would exhort you to read Roochnik on Aristotle’s *Nikomachean Ethics* book 10.7-8 recited in this book concerning theoria (third eye vision, not “contemplation”, key to Aristotle’s philosophy of mystical contact, as an extension of book lambda of his *Metaphysics*. The translation for “bios theoretikos” should be: “visionary life” or “life of mental vision” but not “theoretical life”, and not “contemplation”. Aristotle pupil of Plato was an ancient Hesychast without the name of Jesus with an effulgence of very old and profound Atlantean knowledge, partly unfolding his wings in Byzantium.

There is a customized Aristotle module at the start of chapter 10. It continues this discussion in the context of Proto-Hesychasm and its terminological and typological Aristotelian foundations.

01 Byzantine Receptions, the New Testament

The greatest product of Byzantine receptions is the New Testament. The New Testament was forged under Emperor Constantine in the fourth century A.D. as a pagan, Luciferian heresy to enable pagan survival, a goal that was achieved and that, apart from the aforesaid, lacks functional explanation (beyond words such as, Euhemerism). This conclusion is mainly the result of Radical Criticism since Erasmus. Scholarship is in full agreement with this conclusion. While there is much dissent, it is not scholarship, but belief.

Those who dissent (Luciferian heretics) are obstructing the development of the Christian movement into something modern, not persecutorial, not a morph of male chauvinism. They have not yet considered the great chance that is being given to the New Testament Heresy ("The Heresy", Sophian Gnosticism having been the original thought form of Christ).

The New Testament is not *only* a heretical text: In an esoteric, akroamatic reading the New Testament is a profound and moving explanation of spiritual science known to man since pre-ancient times of Lemuria and Atlantis. That is something that our times are gradually becoming ready to accept. For example, the four canonical Gospels (in this sequence: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and then, John) can be read gainfully as a successive elucidation of the Four Forces of Creation (in Aristotle, misleadingly termed the Four Causes). That is the pre-ancient meaning of the cross symbol, typically as a Swastika. In that modern, enlightened reading of spiritual science, the Gospels of the New Testament still have their future ahead of them. It is no use to obstruct that, for the entrapment of man in the doubt/belief duality is fading in our information age. The genre of the Gospels is: literary forgery. That goes hand in hand with the faked Trinity.

The Divine is always speaking. Rarely, however, does man listen. Souls in mortal lifetimes are locked in the Freudian ego self that is surrounded by invisible defence walls (Ego Defence Mechanisms EDM). That is not so much saying that man is crazy, as that man is blind and deaf to the Divine. Every written text may have a hidden meaning if we discover such a meaning within our individual self and then project it into a given text. The so-called "holy scriptures" of all ages, including without any limitation the Bible and the Quran, are particularly suited as projection boards for such an ego-transcending reading.

As times change, such a reading changes. Today, most drastically so. The ideal is liberation (mukti), an advanced state in which we begin to realize what we are doing, and that the only doer is the Source Existence Plane, God, Allah ... that is not a human. Persons and objects are an illusionary mode of relating to ultimate reality (ancient wisdom from India). The purpose of human life in its many incarnations is, first, to be thrown into illusion, and then to awaken out of illusion. It is like taking a swim in the ocean of phenomena. The knowing realization of our inner living connection with the Prime Source, God, Allah is the death of ego but is not the death of life. The ego mostly consists of the uninformed fear of physical death. That puts the core themes of spiritual wisdom and our inner source, Antaryamin, Daimonion, Sophia into a nutshell. They were well known in antiquity to an elite of spiritual technicians, being rediscovered, also in Byzantium.

Spiritual awakening yearns for connection with the most concentrated humanly available source of divine intelligence. That is the Fourth Force of Creation, traditionally called the Holy Spirit (Holy Ghost). The other three Forces of Creation essentially strive to uplift a human to the realization of the Fourth Force. The realization of the Fourth Force uses a module inside the energy bodies (aura layers) of a human being and is traditionally described as a divine indweller, Antaryamin, Daimonion, Sophia, and other names. That is functionally the higher self of a human, a self that is another individual but living in a higher-dimensional world, typically an immortal in the fifth dimension. (See details especially in vol. 2.) The "Jesus" figure reaches to the top of this entire spiritual hierarchy in our local universe, not directly to God.

I find the discussion about human persons that has been derived mainly from the Gospels (on very scant literary basis) to be confused and misleading. It is correct that, in the Created Worlds, there are many beings branching from one source, Prime Source, Creator. They can actually merge, temporarily, with physical bodies in the third dimension, such as human beings (*homo sapiens sapiens*) and the plant and animal life forms of our level of existence. The talk of a triune god is dyslogic and is drivel. There is one God. The Divine is, properly, not countable. For example, Divine Love cannot be counted; the very notion is ridiculous and self-defeating.

The many beings in Creation have an origin. First, there was one being to separate out of the continuum, then, a second. The first being is composed of three angels (created beings without individual free will) and two people (uncreated being undertaking a self-creation trip with individual free will), merged into one. The second being is composed of two angels and two people. When the Material Creation Worlds were opened, the first being, with the help of the second being, doubled itself, to reappear in every Creation World (local universe in the realms of atomic matter, Material Creation Worlds). The Urantia Book calls this multiple double the “Divine Sons”, and calls the first being the “Paradise Father”. Those are the first three persons below the Source Existence Level, and they are not God but are beings in Creation and are to a large part created and evolving, to some part uncreated.

The first two beings created four more beings. Those are the Four Forces of Creation. That is what the four canonical Gospels in a modern (and pre-ancient Atlantean) reading of spiritual science deal with. Each of the Four Forces is an angel. That makes a total of nine angels, who are the Seraphim of Prime Emanation. The four angels of the Four Forces of Creation are:

- Nuphiel, the Seraph of Prime Emanation of the atomic force (density force, darkness, astromic force),
- Adhjena (Athena) of the plant and animal archetype,
- Buddha of the human archetype (Purusha, ideal cosmic man),
- the Seraph Michael, in our universe linked with Ashtar Sheran, the Holy Spirit, Divine Love and Wisdom.

All beings of Prime Emanation are intricately connected spiritually and are expressions of Divine Love enabling freedom of the individual will in Creation. The Four Angels of Creation each are the head of a vast hierarchy of beings, with the Fourth Force angel heading the hosts of Paradise. All angels personify energies that let the will of the Divine extend into the Created Realms. Humans, of timeless (absonite) origin, in their Creation time window are suspended between the semi-absolute polar opposites of darkness and Light.

The four canonical Gospels of the New Testament from the fourth century A.D. are informed to a surprising extent by the foregoing visionary structure that is so far still secret to our physical senses. Through pertinent information, the veil is lifting, changing the very nature of our local universe and of myriads of other universes, from a Son universe of obscured ultimate source reality to a Shekinah universe of direct source manifestation. That apocalypse (revelation) is the peak event of the eternal process of Creation leading from the dark past half-eternity of the hellish separation illusion to the future half-eternity of immanent Glory. This vision extends to Islam, as well, where, specifically, the old Arabic deity of Allah has assumed a notion of Oneness from Byzantine Neo-Platonism and, through the latter, Yogacara philosophy of India (Advaita Vedanta). Islam thus moves forward from Christianity and focuses specifically on the immanent Glory of the Divine.

I propose to be presenting a genuine Byzantine (Rhomaïke) insider’s reading of the four canonical Gospels, since, under emperor Constantine, it was insiders of the early Byzantine period who authored the texts. The closest parallel that may strike readers is that this is an eastern Hindu or Buddhist, or Indian philosopher’s reading. Indeed, the differences are smaller than uninformed argument may wish them; and the parallel can unlock the spiritual meanings that are hidden to the uninformed. The proposition is not so much for four nuanced (fallow) theologies scripted in the Gospels as it is for four nuanced (potent) mystical realisms.

Following the idea of a parallel, leads may be found in the cross-cultural scholar Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan. Radhakrishnan was not alone in his conviction that there is a truth that underlies the world's religions. As an astute scholar, he implicitly differentiated, however, between the religions and the truth that underlies them. Such truth can be given an intellectual expression without being consumed by it. Granting the disparate nature of world religions, and of most religions even internally, such truth may be characterized as being complex and multifaceted. To the scholar, religions, with their conflicting claims, are, and can be, only an approximation.

In my opinion, mysticism starts where counting stops (Cantor's transfinite, or uncountable). The theories of divine trinity are examples of an overall failed attempt to cross that border while not letting the mind follow from intellect to (transrational) intuition. Intuition is an example for the uncountable and our mental encounter with it in reality. The wisdom concept traditionally is quite inclusive of intuition in ways that our culture does not choose to cultivate any longer. The rational (intellect) with its core activity of counting is valued so highly because in our history we had to acquire it tediously by developing upward from the subrational (mere belief, superstition, circularity). It is no resting point and no end point, however.

Almond, Philip C.; *1. The Thesis of the Unity of All Religions: The Theory of Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan*; in: Philip C(layton) Almond; *Mystical Experience and Religious Doctrine, An Investigation of the Study of Mysticism in World Religions*; Berlin etc. 1982, pp. 11-22

Lyon, Quinter M.; *Mystical Realism in the Thought of Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan*; in: *Philosophy East and West*, volume 16, issue 3/4, 1966, pp. 221-233

My foregoing readings just opened the question: Is "religious experience" a pre-rational experience while mystical experience is a post-rational experience? My tentative answer is yes, as such a distinction can make sense. The rational experience thus is a transformation of religious experience into mystical experience. This may also hold clues for the Gospel exegesis to follow next. The transformation would be of a complex and multi-level nature.

It is recognized that the four Gospels of the New Testament deal with different lead subjects (from Wikipedia, the popular and, here, carefully-annotated online encyclopedia, 2017-03-29):

Gospel of Matthew:

"The gospel (of Matthew) reflects the struggles and conflicts between the evangelist's community and the other Jews, particularly with its sharp criticism of the scribes and Pharisees. Prior to the Crucifixion the Jews are called Israelites, the honorific title of God's chosen people; after it, they are called 'Ioudaioi', Jews, a sign that through their rejection of the Christ the 'Kingdom of Heaven' has been taken away from them and given instead to the church."

Gospel of Mark:

"It (Gospel of Mark) tells of the ministry of Jesus from his baptism by John the Baptist to his death and burial and the discovery of the empty tomb – there is no genealogy or birth narrative, nor, in the original ending at chapter 16, any post-resurrection appearances. It portrays Jesus as an heroic man of action, an exorcist, a healer, and a miracle worker. Jesus is also the Son of God, but he keeps his identity secret, concealing it in parables so that even the disciples fail to understand. All this is in keeping with prophecy, which foretold the fate of the messiah as Suffering Servant. The gospel ends, in its original version, with the discovery of the empty tomb, a promise to meet again in Galilee, and an unheeded instruction to spread the good news of the resurrection."

Gospel of Luke:

“It (Gospel of Luke) tells of the origins, birth, ministry, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ. / Luke is the second-longest of the four gospels, and together with Acts of the Apostles, the pair make up a two-volume work from the same pen, called Luke-Acts. The cornerstone of Luke-Acts’ theology is ‘salvation history’, the author’s understanding that God’s purpose is seen in the way he has acted, and will continue to act, in history.”

Gospel of John:

A simple summary of the very different Gospel of John of the Logos, the Light, is not possible.

The successive introduction of the Four Forces of Creation through the four canonical Gospels is thereby outlined. Such outline is not a precise “definition” since definitions pertain to concepts (symbolized ideas) and not to angels (personified extensions of the Divine will, or Imperative). The breakdown of the four Gospels into a group of three (synoptic Gospels) plus one (Gospel of John) is also appropriate for dealing with the Four Forces of Creation (Three Forces plus one Pure Consciousness, Divine Love-Light Manifestation). That is not to mitigate the contribution of the Three Forces since all Four always act in concert.

Since the Four Forces always act in concert, the only viable path to a Christology leads through the Four Forces, starting with the First Force. The “Christ” is a name of the Fourth Force (Holy Spirit, Divine Love).

Politically, striking the right note of compromise may well have been, and apparently was appropriately perceived as, a matter of life and death for the aging Roman empire of the early fourth century. The deep underlying of the four Gospels is thus a formulaic compromise of religious power politics for issues not only concerning the elite but rooted firmly in all levels of society. See for the heated socio-political situation verging on a civil war:

Digeser, Elizabeth DePalma/ Becker, Matthias/ Simmons, Michael Bland; (in Bibliographic Reduction above)

Action may be likened to the hammer and the anvil. From the forge arose Byzantine Christianity as the future enduring ideology of the imperial rule. The root of the Constantinian New Testament is a, possibly timeless, conflict. The New Testament did not “solve” the conflict. What it did achieve was, roundabout, to channel the conflict and to keep the political friction at bay that the socio-political side generated.

The cast of leading characters is known. The background of the conflict has only recently been “excavated” (to use a preferred term of Digeser) from a terribly confusing and fragmented late ancient body of source material. Still now, it is hard to understand what the conflict was about that broke out in waves of pogroms against Christians, prior to Christianity being proclaimed the state religion (Theodosius, 380), with the strange long-term effect of pagan survival (Euhemerism). Digeser sets right-side up the importance of the *beliefs* of the actors, versus usually invoked social, economic and political - material - motives for conflict. We are, in fact, witnessing something that the Roman Empire is oft attributed as having been free from, namely, religious strife simmering in the form of a civil war under the surface of a barely maintained peace of the realm, perhaps more of a fiction in those olden times than we usually are ready to admit to ourselves. One lead theme of her book, the fruit of over a decade of pioneering research, is thus, violence caused by ideas, by all means an important topic for our own times.

Religious violence in the Roman empire of the fourth and fifth centuries A.D. is confirmed by

Gaddis, Michael; *There is No Crime for Those Who Have Christ, Religious Violence in the Roman Empire*; Berkeley etc. 2005

According to Gaddis, the Roman Empire married Roman imperial power with a Christian ideology in the fourth and fifth centuries A.D. in reaction to the violently changing religious scene. This well supports the analysis of Digeser.

The Constantinian New Testament is inextricably linked with the conflicting ideas at the heart of the violence of its time. The most impressive Manga figure of this is Saint Paul. The Gospels through their vertical axis form a mental sanctuary for reference by the preacher model Paul.

The social opening of significant parts of spiritual elite knowledge to the masses can be seen as the birth of an illiterate mass audience with a mass consciousness (for the literate modern age, an early communications theme of Jürgen Habermas). The ancient arts of rhetorics were drawn upon. Moreover, suitable forms of hermeneutics (modern expression) were required to ensure that the desired content would be made intelligible to the masses for them to grasp it. For this, an unending series of redux versions in form of subtle “divine person” formulas was developed and deployed with sharp monitoring activity; and philosophical methods of logics and dialectics were put to work on transformations under the dominant new central text. This entire jump-start conversion package needed to come urgently as a crisis response with high specificity to affirm the state power with vastly expanded sacred powers of the emperor as (in modern terms) a religious arbiter.

The seeds of the intellectual commotion that Digeser analyses were sown in an acerbic dispute among two leading Neoplatonists, Porphyrios and Iamblichos. The basic positions were clear: Porphyrios, a pupil of Plotinos, wrote against the Christians. Iamblichos, younger than Porphyrios and Porphyrios’ disciple, was in favour of the Christians, despite being a Neoplatonist. Both contenders were Syrians. There was also an intellectual link back to Origenes, the somewhat different church father. Here is a micro-timeline of the key players on the idea level:

Origenes (185 to c.254)
Ammonios Sakkas (242/243 to shortly after Plotinos)
his pupil, Plotinos (205 to 270)
his pupil, Porphyrios (ca.233 to c 301/305)
his pupil, Iamblichos (c.240/245 to c.320/325)

Were those the key thinkers who ushered in the need for the New Testament of Constantine? Taken in the proposed context, the analysis of Digeser is suggestive of such a scenario. The conversion of Constantine, and with him, of the Roman Empire, was evidently of a much more strongly hybrid and synthetic nature than has been believed throughout most of history. This is not unique only to the New Testament. Cf. for example:

“Adam and Eva” a lead OT motive – means in Sanskrit:
aham eva, for: „I am”, alternate translation: “I only”.

The violence motivated by two clashing belief systems, one old and traditional, the other upstart and coming, is a sign of dissolving and shifting identities. One of its consequences was a break in the intellectual forms and formats of the old and traditional ways: Nearing the end of antiquity, the established format for intellectual life were two genres, namely, (i) the philosophical commentary genre, and, (ii) the participation in, and statements of, one of the ancient philosophy schools of a less directly commentarial nature. Now, from the crisis that Digeser dissects, something new was to come, to wit: (iii) original writings, comparable in their height of innovation with the classical age of the fifth and fourth centuries B.C. in Athens. This new, third type of genre entered the stage with a bang via the NT, not to remain a singularity, but to become the creative archetype for a new wave of original writings during the entire Byzantine millennium and beyond, with its boundaries carefully guarded by heresiologists of the mighty Church. At its deep level, the Byzantine wisdom development was a kaleidoscopic mixing and blending of the old and new creative archetypes in a millennium of “Byzantine receptions”. Islam was to a considerable extent a spin-off of the NT archetype blended with Neoplatonism which then influentially also entered the game.

Additionally, I refer to the congenial and most learned perspective presented by:

Stroumsa, Guy G.; (in Bibliographic Reduction above), but see details of titular Christology below.

The main general tendencies that Stroumsa highlights for late antiquity in chapters 1 and 2 are the “end of sacrifice” and “patterns of rationalization” (his book’s Part I: Transformations of Religion in Late Antiquity).

The requisite power compromise came forth in the created text, later called New Testament, predominantly in its four Gospels, belonging to the gospel genre on the face of it but upon scrutiny with modern information being repositories of esoteric spirituality in the Hellenic elite tradition. The power compromise, with its shifting borderlines throughout history, is usually referred to as “theology” but is of a purely mundane imperial core. It is historically most alien to any notions of an “early Christian origin” of such texts. The veritable early texts, as far as fragments have come down to us, vastly differ. There is much evidence cited in scholarship of “Darwinian text evolution” from early Christian origins, but upon testing, none of such text evolution evidence is not imaginary, and by any standards not fool-proof. The New Testament text is known to this day and is readily available. I have relied for the theological issues in my exegesis on:

Strecker, Georg; (in Bibliographic Reduction above)

Additionally, in preparation for this instant book (which would count as “vol. 7” in the series listed in the front matters above), I have compiled a study that I chose not to publish because I believe that it might freak people out. Tibetan practice today also has chosen, on good grounds, to classify the circle of themes and insights that go into the making of such a study. (SG; The Orbs of the Gods, Plato’s Parmenides Merkaba Theory in the Mirror of Vajrayana (Diamond Vehicle); written from 2016-09-05 to 2016-09-12), 98 pages pdf with many photos from the open internet.

The Tibetan themes, to start from that end, are, chiefly: the rainbow body, the shrinking of the human physical body as part of the rainbow body process, and the inner teachings of Dzogchen (the Great Perfection). According to Tibetan tradition, the rainbow body practitioner, today always an old and venerable person of highest Vajrayana achievements in many lifetimes, disappears leaving either nothing at all of the physical body behind or mere vestiges such as some fingernails. On the other end, the person comes out in a higher world, today often called the fifth dimension, where biological immortal youth is the norm, and which is a portal to multidimensional existence.

It is more than apparent that, at least up to late antiquity, both the Jewish and the Hellenic inner wisdom circles were familiar with functionally the same body of teachings as that circle of themes and insights that were just delineated from the Tibetan Vajrayana side. The same knowledge can also be traced to ancient Egypt (Drunvalo Melchizedek). In Jewish spiritual wisdom, the texts I refer to fall in the Merkaba genre. The Kabala with its “Tree of Life” is a specialized Merkaba teaching about the expanded human chakra system.

The Merkaba (Drunvalo Melchizedek) is the Light-Body, or ninth body (eighth energy body) of man (see in vol. 2). It was largely destroyed during the fall of man from Lemuria and Atlantis and needs to be rebuilt. Here is the major part of my flap text for my unpublished study:

“Scholarship has so far overlooked the Greek Merkaba teaching of Plato in his dialogue ‘Parmenides’. The Merkaba is considered to be a Hebrew domain. Most hidden of all, however, and profoundest of extant Merkaba teachings, is Vajrayana, the esoteric Japanese and Tibetan Buddhism. This book looks into the connections and meanings. It is not written for specialists, since such do not yet exist for this question. The viewpoint comes from spiritual science as explained in the eight earlier books in this series (... .) The importance of the Chariot-Merkaba-Vajrayana is that it controls our paranormal powers. Further, it is the functional center of human biological immortality.”

I contend that the spiritual efficacy of the four canonical Gospels in particular, the Book of Revelation, and the balance of the New Testament is derived from ancient Hellenic and Jewish (probably, in that order) knowledge pertaining to this same circle of themes, in late antiquity to a large part arguably organized under the roof of Neoplatonism, not necessarily available to the common people and thus, at most, sparsely documented in coded symbols and hints. The deep truth that is ever being sought is not so much the Divine as the Human, or call it, modernly, the transhuman, if so desired. The transhuman is inevitably transpersonal. It presents the vast range that is germane to that what humans experience as freedom. That is the background that is needed to read the Gospels of the New Testament in the purview of their main editor, Ioannis Chrysostomos under emperor Constantine in the fourth century A.D. Note that the Book of Revelation is pre-Kaballistic and does not go into the expanded chakra system; it hints at such a process, however, through its energetics in an inspired reading with tingling sensation.

The eastern expectation to a text with such function as the New Testament would be, a profound treatise on spiritual liberation (mukti). Indeed the New Testament, through the sacrifice of Jesus, voices a fervent plea, textually and visually in its most penetrating mental images, against violence, including such violence as was in common use in the Roman empire. It wisely keeps its distance from ignorant and fundamentalistic calls for revenge – which would, after all, have been directed against the Roman Empire. For the creators of Constantine's Byzantine New Testament such a self-contradiction was the most daunting pitfall to negotiate around; given the possibilities, the task was masterfully achieved. It took considerable philosophical acumen and art of state to foresee such a self-induced crisis and to devise the strategy, means and methods to avoid it from the outset. Quite obviously, the pool of knowledge for this foresight was the body of ancient philosophy as known to the educated elite of the time.

The New Testament itself was a highly innovative, even unprecedented elite response to the problem of a simmering civil unrest, or civil war, the religious roots of which reached far beyond the elite into the masses. The new organization that arose from this was the Byzantine state church, later called the Orthodox Church. The state secret behind this was the claim of an apostolic entitlement of the converted form of the Roman Empire that is today called Byzantium, a secret that held its lid into our own day. That claim was laid most prominently by emperor Constantine I but definitely not before him, and by his New Testament. The ideology blueprint, including Paul, thus belongs in the "innovation" basket. As it looks, the non-evolutionary creative elements in that are of great weight compared with the evolutionary traditional elements that were, of course, integrated as a foundation. The NT gives us a still from the fourth century of the self-organization of the empire that subsequently was to avert twice the Huns from Europe (453, 1341).

The Gnostic gospel theme has shown us to beware of the theme in the canonical Gospels themselves. Based on threadbare texts that are called proto-gospels, none of which have known authors, the canonical Gospels rise far above mere biography and history. They are Gnostic texts (spiritual knowledge texts; "gnosis" simply means "knowledge") themselves. That is their true value for the future of the Christian religion. This has already been demonstrated for Paul ("Gnostic Paul", Elaine Pagels) but to my mind merely spearheads a modern understanding of the entire New Testament as a multivalent book collection both for mass belief and for elite Gnosticism of essentially ancient provenance. In our information age, the latter value of the NT is coming open to the public eye in a social move away from merely the elites of the planet, and is meeting a modern public demand to obtain more than mere beliefs.

Based on such a wisdom-oriented understanding of the NT, it is not a far cry to seek for spiritual knowledge embedded in writings from Byzantium outside the New Testament. That is at least one weighty essential part of what I have termed, "Byzantine receptions".

Perhaps the most important recent discovery concerning a life-energy reading of the four Gospels is the Gospel of Judas. It has initiated a discussion that the passion of Jesus was made possible only because Jesus consented to it, since it was his job to undergo the process. The death and resurrection is the one miracle to

come after the transfiguration. The cruel Roman penalty of death by crucifixion was tortuous over several hours or even several days. In Jesus' case, it was preceded by heavy flogging and the verdict to carry the cross (or, at least, the cross-bar of the cross). The time on the cross prior to death is characterized by slow death by receding bodily functions, as has been described in the medical literature. This generates an overwhelming panic-level fear of dying.

The dark life force (Atomic Force) is the antagonist of the higher Forces. Its normal purpose concerning organisms is to develop the presence of the three higher Forces in them by antagonism by challenge and response. A resurrection in the same physical body that died indicates that the higher forces have overcome the developmental antagonist force because their power of resistance, lodged in the Light-Body (Merkaba) is at least sufficiently strong. This presupposes a positive immortal being of a very high level, technically in practical terms an angel-human hybrid. In Jesus' case, this effect burned away the karma (sin) energies that had amassed on the planet. It was the only feasible method to achieve that. Also, it planted on the planet those energies that had overcome, together with the bloodline of Jesus and Mary Magdalene. The "crucifixion" has a double meaning that overlaps with the fourfold Creation Forces. That is the difficult elusive content that the four Gospels develop successively, with a particular hiatus between the three synoptic Gospels and the fourth Gospel (John). The hiatus separates the ascending Kundalini energy of separated monadic life forms and the descending Holy Spirit Kundalini energy (divine Love-Light) of multi-monadic Paradise life. The Book of Revelation is, scripted in its symbols, like an executive summary of the Four Gospels that open the NT. The full power of Jesus' existence level was never displayed but it was toned down to a small per-mille ratio to match his task on Earth.

If I am asked, what do I believe about Jesus, my answer is: Based on the literary references outside the NT, I find that Jesus is one of the better-documented real but not overly prominent people of antiquity. I believe that he was born in Palestine on August 21, B.C. 07 from a woman who became pregnant from a man. Historic Easter was on March 23-25, B.C. 27. That was 2003 years ago counted from Easter 2017 of our calendar, which was a Sunday-Tuesday. The Jesus persona were two people from planet Thiaooouba. The first went to Japan and is buried there in the district of Aomori. He died very old, had three daughters, and brought writing (once again) to Japan. The second was deposited by a ship in the thirtieth year of the Jesus persona. He had a synthetic male body not discernible from a human. He was an awake Thiaooouba without a consciousness veil. He (internally both genders) had exact foreknowledge and consented. He had healing powers. He was extremely charismatic. A dead person can be raised within three days period from death, but the Lazarus narrative is not historic; it is legendary. The dead body of the judicially assassinated enemy of the Roman state, Jesus, was taken back on the ship and preserved for reference. The facial expression remains that of a person who was most painfully tortured to death (preserved in graphic by OR-RAR-DAN after detailed information by Michel Desmarquet). The resurrection narrative also is not historic. The second Jesus was crucified by the Roman government of Palestine at the instigation of the Jewish priesthood. He was an astral projection of Sananda who is several tens of millions of years young at the central object of this local universe.

The period of Victorian spiritualism and thereafter received a bulk of information from Sananda through channeling. There has been much channeling apart from that, but with different, more day-to-day information. Also, a pedestrian visit to (Sananda as) the ruler of this universe was described. See the following books, in addition to the *Thiaooouba Prophecy* book cited in earlier vols.:

Kontou, Tatiana; Willburn, Sarah (editors); *The Ashgate Research Companion to Nineteenth-Century Spiritualism and the Occult*; Farnham, Burlington 2012

Borgia, Anthony; *Life in the World Unseen*; London 1954, chapter XV (pedestrian visit)

Padgett, James E.; *The True Gospel Revealed Anew by Jesus*; Received Through ~; volumes 1, 2, 3, 4; nn. (Washington, D.C. 1941?)

In the same age that is the subject of the Ashgate Research Companion, the Higher Criticism from radical German enlightenment became acceptable in Anglican clerical circles, see:

Treloar, Geoffrey R.; *The Cambridge Triumvirate and the Acceptance of New Testament Higher Criticism in Britain 1850-1900*; in: *Journal of Anglican Studies*, volume 5, issue 1, June 2006, pp. 13-32

That is an aside that strictly speaking has nothing to do with Byzantine history. It does have quite a lot to say, however, about the possible modern acceptance of Byzantine history in its difficult parts (NT total forgery). I find it cautioning not to take the narrative details of the Gospel texts as literal truths but to find other ways to make sense of the Gospels. Padgett especially is directly critical of the Gospel cult (text cult) and its doctrinary tendencies. To my mind, the historical details of Jesus' life apart from the outline that is known are unimportant. It is quite fitting here that the medium is the message.

I used an online Bible text, King James Version.

The "Gospel according to Matthew" is the first book of the NT.

When Jesus was born, three wise men came from the east, "Saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews?" That refers to the opening genealogy. All that is made up. It shows that we are dealing with fiction, in the genre of a fairy tale, about a wondrous miracle worker. The text is well built and makes points along the way.

The parents are mentioned, King Herod, John the Baptist who starts preaching. An entity is introduced who, in English, is named "the Lord". The Heavens open for Jesus, and a voice from Heaven calls Jesus "my beloved son". This would probably be very difficult to prove. There is no eyewitness report.

Chapter 4 tells of the devil and his temptation. In terms of the Four Forces, that is a reference to the First Force (atomic force) that works through antagonist action. Jesus masters the temptation by resisting. This story motive recurs in Mark, briefly, and in Luke. The name, "Satan", from the Hebrew Bible is introduced, which in Hebrew means a prosecutor in court, which refers functionally to the antagonist force (First Force of Creation).

Jesus preaches in the style of a polished rhetorician. That points to the true authorship, not more. Jesus is then portrayed as "one having authority" (like an emperor). That is part of the overarching ideology. Then there is talk of apostles. There were no apostles. There is mention of the "day of judgment". For the learned, that is a reference to the end of Plato's main Sokratic dialogue, *Politeia* (Republic) where, at the end, there is a scene of judgment, the myth of Er, son of Armenios (10.614-10.621). Those who have lived an evil life go must down to the underworld. Those whose life has pleased the gods may take the upward path. The reference is strategically placed in the Matthew narrative, later to hit the culprits in the face. (We know who the culprits were for the Byzantines.) The balance of this Gospel enacts contextually the downward path as an instruction and warning.

Jesus gives the "Five Discourses of Matthew" that are foundational for the Christian Jesus myth. Centrally, Jesus is named the "Messiah" (Hebrew) in Greek (Christos).

Matthew is followed by the three other Gospels, those of Mark, of Luke, and of John. Titles were very important in the Byzantine bureaucracy. So-called theology from that provenance is often just a quibble for titles.

The second Gospel, Mark, deals first with John the Baptist and Jesus of Nazareth from Galilee. Citing what the prophets wrote, John is “my messenger”. The ministry of Jesus is addressed. The title of “Christos” for Jesus was used as a proper name only for Jesus, but now, in Mark, the “Christos” sobriquet starts being developed into a title. The use of Christos as more than just a proper name in the first Gospel, Matthew, was not intended by the creators of the NT because the First Force works its salvific contributions by antagonist action. The three higher Forces Two, Three and Four work by non-antagonist action. In each of the Gospels two, three and four, the “Christos” as a title stands for one of the three higher Forces of Creation. For example, in the third Gospel (Luke), the “Christos” title represents the Third Force (perfect man, ovoastromic force or human archetype of Creation).

Thus, there are three different types or levels of titular “Christos” (three different titular Christs) in succession from the second Gospel to the fourth Gospel. In current scholarship, that is detected as an ongoing development of the “Christos” title from the second through the fourth Gospel. That is the deeper esoteric meaning that the creators of the NT in the early fourth century A.D. placed into the canonical Gospels. That is what the four canonical Gospels are truly about, not anything like a detailed Jesus biography. Jesus is merely a proxy to clarify the Four Forces of Creation, but the fact that they are represented by one man, Jesus, reminds the reader that the Four Forces, high Seraphim of Prime Emanation, always act closely together as extension of the divine Creator will.

The failed and futile attempt to establish such a monstrosity as a “triune god” (originally in drug-addicted later Egyptian priesthood) are faintly reminiscent of the three successive but very closely connected Christs of the Gospels.

Broadhead, Edwin K.; *Naming Jesus, Titular Christology in the Gospel of Mark*; Sheffield 1999

Broadhead gives relevant details of titular Christology. The starting point for the development is Mark. It is only John, however, (fourth Gospel) where “Jesus speaks most clearly in christological terms” (supra, p. 14). I read Luke as taking a middle position.

The notion of a Johannine turn of Byzantium relates primarily to the fourth Gospel, John. In the west, the unquestioned most important Gospel was Matthew, the First Force Gospel. In Byzantium, the purported author of the fourth Gospel received the honorary title “John the Theologian”. This reflected the fact that in Byzantium the fourth Gospel, that of John, was undoubtedly the most important gospel. In vol. 1, p. 82, I wrote, within context:

Byzantine receptions take a Johannine turn. The key issue is the “Tabor Light” and its understanding. That is the big drift in all of Byzantine receptions. All resources of the ancient intellect are harnessed before that extremely difficult cart to pull. Having understood that, I believe that one has understood the nature of the very complicated Byzantine receptions to the marrow.

I refer there to Pollard (supra). Later, in the Addenda, I point out the anonymous nature of the author “John”, and that scholarship today assumes at least three anonymous authors behind that name for the NT Johannine corpus.

There is a little known pre-Byzantine background of the Johannine turn. See:

Manor, T. Scott; (in Bibliographical Reduction above) and the other titles there relating to John.

02 Themes of Sir Richard Sorabji

Donini, Pierluigi; *Commentary and Tradition, Aristotelianism, Platonism, and Post-Hellenic Philosophy*; edited by Mauro Bonazzi; Berlin, New York 2011 (Italian)

Sorabji, Richard (editor); *Philoponus and the Rejection of Aristotelian Science*; 2nd edition, London 2010

-----; 400 Years of Transition, The Philosophy of the Commentators, 200-600 AD, A Sourcebook; London 2012; volume 1, Psychology (with Ethics and Religion); volume 2, Physics; volume 3, Logic and Metaphysics (originally 2004)

----- (editor); *Aristotle Transformed, The Ancient Commentators and Their Influence*; 2nd edition, London, New York 2016

This is a “themes of” overview. It cannot replace the study of the commentary texts for those who want to specialize. They are naturally hard to summarize since they are already commentaries to something else. They develop philosophical concepts that are already known to mediaevists, often from study of western medieval philosophy. However, the Byzantines appear to have developed many of these concepts earlier than the west. This is an approach to the complexity that, standing on the shoulders of giants, Ricardo Salles has developed, see:

Salles, Ricardo; *Metaphysics, Soul, and Ethics in Ancient Thought, Themes from the Work of Richard Sorabji*; Oxford etc. 2005

To reduce the complexity even more, I cite, rather unimaginatively, the book descriptions of the books:

Pierluigi Donini volume:

The volume collects the most important papers Pierluigi Donini wrote in the last three decades with the aim of promoting a better assessment of post-hellenistic philosophy. The philosophical relevance of post-hellenistic philosophy is now widely (though not yet universally) recognized. Yet much remains to be done. The common practice of focusing each single school in itself detracts from a balanced assessment of the strategies exploited by many philosophers of the period. On the assumption that debates among schools play a major role in the philosophy of the commentators, Donini concentrates on the interaction between leading Aristotelians and Platonists and demonstrates that the developments of both systems of thought were heavily influenced by a continuous confrontation between the two schools. And whereas in cases such as Alcinous and Aspasius this is basically uncontroversial, for other authors such as Alexander, Antiochus and Plutarch the pioneering work of Donini paves the way for a better understanding of their doctrines and definitely confirms the intellectual importance of the first imperial age, when the foundations were laid of versions of both Aristotelianism and Platonism which were bound to influence the whole history of European thought, from Late Antiquity onwards.

Sorabji Philoponus volume:

See review by Sebastian Gerz:

http://booksandjournals.brillonline.com/docserver/18725473/5/2/18725082_v5n2_s11.pdf?expires=1492349935&id=id&accname=guest&checksum=3825C6326C32845D83A24122B1FE7333

Sorabji, Aristotle Transformed:

This book brings together twenty articles giving a comprehensive view of the work of the Aristotelian commentators. First published in 1990, the collection is now brought up to date with a new introduction by Richard Sorabji. New generations of scholars will benefit from this reissuing of classic essays, including seminal works by major scholars, and the volume gives a comprehensive background to the work of the project on the Ancient Commentators on Aristotle, which has published over 100 volumes of translations since 1987 and has disseminated these crucial texts to scholars worldwide.

The importance of the commentators is partly that they represent the thought and classroom teaching of the Aristotelian and Neoplatonist schools and partly that they provide a panorama of a thousand years of ancient Greek philosophy, revealing many original quotations from lost works. Even more significant is the profound influence uncovered in some of the chapters of this book that they exert on later philosophy, Islamic and Western. Not only did they preserve anti-Aristotelian material which helped inspire Medieval and Renaissance science, but they present Aristotle in a form that made him acceptable to the Christian church. It is not Aristotle, but Aristotle transformed and embedded in the philosophy of the commentators that so often lies behind the views of later thinkers.

Sorabji Sourcebook volumes 1, 2, 3:

This is a sourcebook that draws upon the 400 years of transition from ancient Greek philosophy to the medieval philosophy of Islam and the West. Philosophy was then often written in the form of commentaries on the works of Plato and Aristotle. Many ideas wrongly credited to the Middle Ages derive from this period, e.g. that of impetus in dynamics and intentional objects in philosophy of mind. The later Neoplatonist commentators fought a losing battle with Christianity, but inadvertently made Aristotle acceptable to Christians by ascribing to him belief in a Creator God and human immortality. They also provided a panorama of up to 1000 years of preceding Greek philosophy, much of it otherwise lost. They serve as the missing link essential for understanding the history of Western philosophy.

1. Psychology was for the Neoplatonist commentators the gateway to metaphysics and theology. It was the subject on which Plato and Aristotle disagreed most, and the subject on which the commentators went furthest beyond them in their search for an amalgamation. Ethics and religious practice fall naturally under psychology and are included in this volume.

2. The physics of the commentators was innovatory. The Neoplatonists among them thought that the world of space and time was causally ordered by a non-spatial, non-temporal world, and this required original thinking. Of the sixth-century Neoplatonists, Simplicius considered his teacher's ideas on space and time to be unprecedented, and Philoponus revised Aristotelianism, to produce a new physics built around the Christian belief in God's creation of the world. The Middle Ages borrowed from Philoponus and other commentators, the proofs of a finite past, the idea of degrees of latitude in change and mixture, and in dynamics the idea of impetus and the defence of motion in a vacuum.

3. This volume covers three main areas of study. First, the metaphysics of Aristotle's logical works: the concepts of universal and particular underwent surprising transformations in this period, which explain later medieval views, and which gave rise to debates, still raging today, on personal survival after an interruption such as death. Secondly, logic in a more conventional sense: the most impressive debate was perhaps on the existence of the subject in singular and universal statements. There was also debate about the very different Aristotelian and Stoic conceptions of syllogism, on modal logic, on induction, on the nature of mathematics and on philosophy of language. Thirdly, the higher metaphysics of the Neoplatonists, who taught Augustine,

and indirectly Descartes, to look for truth within ourselves. They struggled with the question whether our higher intellectual selves have distinct individuality, and thus gave food to both sides in the great medieval debate between Aquinas and the followers of Averroes on individual human immortality.

03 Lift-Off with Maximos the Confessor

Allen; Bronwen; *Oxford Handbook I*

Louth, Andrew; *Maximos the Confessor*; in: Parry, Ken;/, pp. 293-306

Петров В.В.; *Максим Исповедник: онтология и метод в византийской философии VII в.* (Russian: Maximus the Confessor, Ontology and Method in Byzantine Philosophy of the 7th c.); 2007

Online: https://azbyka.ru/otechnik/Maksim_Ispovednik/maksim-ispovednik-ontologija-i-metod-v-vizantijskoj-filosofii-vii-veka/

Also listed as a dissertation, Moscow 2008, ref. 319185, at: <http://www.dissercat.com/content/uchenie-maksima-ispovednika-v-kontekste-filosofsko-bogoslovskoi-traditsii-pozdnei-antichnost#ixzz4ePaqSErA>

St. Maximos the Confessor lived c.580-662. He was an erudite student of philosophy, became a theologian, was judicially mutilated, then had his teachings upheld by a Council. He died in exile. The well argued view of a Russian author, Valery Valentinovich Petrov, is that Maximos the Confessor (c.580-662) brought a breakthrough in the methodology of Byzantine philosophy. This chapter is part one a critical query into Petrov's findings. V.V. Petrov's thesis is, in short sentence length:

“the original system of Christian Platonism, developed by Maxim”

i.e., Maximos was the originator of Christian Platonism.

The online abstract provides the following information (link, supra, my machine translation);

Introduction of the thesis (part of the author's abstract) On the theme „The Teaching of Maxim the Confessor in the context of the philosophical theological tradition of late antiquity and the early Middle Ages“

The subject of this study is the reconstruction of the teachings of one of the most significant and complex Byzantine thinkers - Maxim the Confessor (662). His teaching was formed in the bosom of a rich tradition, which is characterized by the interpenetration of the heritage of classical philosophy and Christian theology. Direct predecessors of Maxim the Confessor are such Christian philosophers as Origen, Nemesius of Emes, Basil the Great, Gregory the Theologian, Gregory of Nyssa, ps. Dionysius the Areopagite, John of Scythians. Through their mediation (as well as through the modern school philosophical tradition), Maxim learned and transformed for his purposes many ideas of Platonism, Aristotelianism and Stoicism.

In the era of Maxim, the meaning of the concepts „philosophy“ and „philosopher“ differed significantly from the classical, nevertheless, the teachings of the above-mentioned theologians, as a rule, represent a coherent system in which the categorical apparatus, methods and conceptual tools of ancient philosophy are actively involved. They are the subject of our study.

1. The relevance of the subject of research. Half a century ago, the history of philosophy ignored the philosophical and theological teachings of authors of late antiquity and the early Middle

Ages, whether Christian thinkers or Neoplatonists. The era of post-Plotinov philosophers-the Neoplatonists or commentators of Aristotle-was viewed as the period of the decline of genuine philosophy and the time of growing irrationality. For the same reason, it was believed that

1 Avg. The remark of A.F. Losev: „It became a custom, especially in popular publications, to confine oneself only to the philosophy of Thales to Aristotle. This period is sometimes called „classical classic“. After all, this classic takes only some two centuries (VI-1U centuries BC), while all the ancient philosophy covers at least 1200 years. Sometimes such an approach is motivated by the fact that the first two centuries, called classics, represent the flowering of ancient philosophy. It turns out that the heyday immediately began, and then for a whole millennium there was only decline. We have to prove that. Plato and Aristotle only laid the foundation for subsequent philosophical development, and that the subjectivism of the last millennium of antiquity created unprecedented forms of subtle philosophical development, represented also by a huge literary heritage. Postclassical Hellenism was much less developed, and the last centuries of ancient philosophy were generally recognized as religious, magical and decadent, and therefore often were not at all appreciated by historians. The most recent ancient philosophical school, namely, Neoplatonism, as a whole was almost completely unexplored until the 20th century. And was presented only in the form of separate and fractional studies. „(See“ The Philosophy of the System of Christian Thinkers can not, and should not, be the subject of historical and philosophical science. „This fully applies to the teachings of Maximus the Confessor (about 580-662) - now recognized as one of the most significant Byzantine thinkers. Mostly, the original system of Christian Platonism, developed by Maxim, was poorly studied due to its complexity, the inescapability of sources and the lack of translations. They have changed the situation dramatically and are marked by a sharp increase in the number of studies of his thought. Manima's legacy is being intensively studied: the recently published bibliography lists 1129 publications devoted to it2.

The situation has changed not only with regard to research relating to Maximus the Confessor. In general, the attitude towards the study of the philosophical teachings of late antiquity changed. In recent decades, critical publications of texts and translations of texts by such later authors as Iamblichus and Proclus have been published. A special series of translations of treatises written by late commentators of Aristotle is published. In the field of serious study were Christian philosophers of Byzantium: ps-Dionysy Areopagite, John of Scythopolis, John Philopon, Maximus the Confessor. The result of better acquaintance and a deeper understanding of these traditions was the reassessment of the significance of this period in the history of the development of European rationality. In particular, the understanding has come to the fact that the construction of „early Byzantine theologians rests much more firmly on the foundation of ancient philosophical systems than was previously thought.

Recent studies show that the philosophy in Byzantium did not end at all with the closure of the Athenian Academy in 529. Having ceased to exist in the form of self-seeking truth, the beginnings of the world and man, it continued to exist in two ways. Fundamentals of the old philosophy in its logical part, as well as antiquity in general and in particular „, in the book. A.F. LOSEV, Daring of the Spirit (Moscow: Izd-vo polit, lit-ry, 1988), p. 171-172).

2 Peter van Deun, „Maxime le Confesseur, État de la question et bibliographie exhaustive“, *Sacris Erudiri* 38 (1998-1999), p. 485-573. See also Maria L. Gatti, *Massimo il Confessore. Saggio di bibliografia generale ragionata e contributi per una ri-costruzione scientifica del suo pensiero metafisico e religioso*. Introd. Di G. Reale (Milano, 1987), 430 p.; A. G. Dunaev, Maxim Confessor, in the book: *Hesychasm. Annotated bibliography. Under the Society*. Ed. S. S. Khoruzhego (Moscow: Publishing Council of the Russian Orthodox Church, 2004), p. 242-256 (selected bibliography of editions, translations and studies on Maximus the Confessor). A bibliography of publications and studies on Maxim for the period 1675-1998, prepared by Peter Van Deun (Peter Van Deun), is available on the Internet at the Institute for Early Christian Studies and Byzantium: <http://www.arts.kuleuven.be/byzantium/Bvzantium/Engels/Projects/Maximus.htm> (May, 2008). In the form of excerpts and popular translations were included in the applied discipline, called „logic“ or „dialectic“, which provided Christian theology with a categorical apparatus and conceptual tools. Actually the name „philosophy“ has become Christian philosophy, theology, „wisdom“. Philosophers began to be called monks, through penance and contemplation, likened to God.

Thus, the study of philosophical doctrines of late antiquity and the early Middle Ages is one of the priorities of modern historical and philosophical studies; And the study of the thought of Maxim the Confessor, not in isolation, but in the broad context of the preceding and contemporary tradition, is actual: as for an adequate understanding of his own metaphysical system, which is the original synthesis of ancient Neoplatonism and Christian theology, and for studying the history of reception and transformation Ancient philosophical heritage in early Byzantium.

2: Degree of elaboration of problems in foreign and domestic literature. The fundamental monograph that determined the study of Maxim's thought for subsequent decades was the work of Hans Urs von Balthazar *Cosmic Liturgy* (1941).⁴ Prior to this study, the significance of Maxim's writings was almost universally reduced to the role that they played in the Christological disputes of the 7th century. Balthazar explored the historical, philosophical and theological content of the Maxim system proper, showing the originality of Maxim as a thinker. In 1961, Baltazar published an extended and revised edition of the *Cosmic Liturgy*, which took into account the criticisms voiced in the 1950s by E. von Ivanka and Polycarp Sherwood. In particular, Balthazar refused; From the notion that Maxim experienced and overcame the crisis of „Origenism“. A peculiarity of Balthazar's approach to the *Cosmic Liturgy* was that the author was not just a historian of theology, but an original thinker, a Catholic theologian. Although Maxim studied the teachings in the context of the development of Greek patristicism, Balthazar

Luc Brisson, „The Byzantine World and Greek Philosophy,“ *Greek Philosophy*, ed. M. Kahto-Sperber, t. I (Moscow: Greco-Latin Cabinet of YA Shichalina, 2008), p. 829.

⁴ See H.U. Von Balthasar, *Kosmische Liturgie. Maximus der Bekenner: Höhe und Krise des griechischen Weltbilds* (Freiburg im Breisgau, 1941), 373 S.

⁵ This study has been translated into main European languages, see *Liturgia cosmica. L'immagine dell'universo in Massimo il Confessore* (Roma 1976); *Liturgie cosmique: Maxime le Confesseur* (P., 1947); *Cosmic Liturgy. The Universe According to Maximus the Confessor*

(San Francisco, 2003). Russian translation is close to completion. Saw in the teachings of Maxim the opportunity to answer questions vital to the French and German Catholic theology of the mid-20th century. In particular, he tried to find a counterbalance to the Hegelian paradigm, which brought down the sensually given reality to the level of representations of the thinking subject.

An important stage in the study of Maxim was the work of Polycarp in Sherwood. In his monograph *Early 'Difficulties' of St. Maxim the Confessor and the denial of Origenism*, the doctrinal content and the historical and philosophical context of the main work of Mako Sim - *Difficulties for John* (1955) are examined. The merit of Sherwood is the study of the handwritten tradition with reference to the writings of Maxim, as well as their approximate dating. With regard to the doctrinal content, then analyzing the anti-orogenic polemics of Maxim, Sherwood determined the degree of his dependence on Origen and Evagrius of Pontus, reconstructed the Origenian doctrine of the sentient beings' genade, explored the pre-history and significance of such categories important for Maxim's teaching as the triad „ Essence - ability - action „and opposition“ logos - tropos „.

The most significant event after the books of Balthazar and Sherwood was the publication of the doctoral dissertation of Lars Thunberg *Microcosm and Mediator. Bogoslovsky anthropology of Maxim the Confessor* (1965) 9. The book examines the historical and theological context of the doctrine of Maxim and its sources (pp. 1-51), sets forth Maxim's teaching on the creation of the world, including the notion of creation from nothing, analyzes the terms „nature“, „difference“, „separation, Logos „,“ fishing „(river 52-99). The central place in the work is devoted to the reconstruction of the anthropology of Maxim: the pair „soul-body“, and the triad „mind-soul-body“, the importance of such anthropological categories as „image“ and „likeness“ of God in man, man as microcosm and mediator Between sensory creation and God, the anthropological consequences of the fall, the idea of „double creation“ in Maxim and his predecessors (pp. 100-178). Particular attention is paid to the psychological teachings of Maxim. Trichotomic representation of the soul

6 Cm. Brian E. Daly, „Translator's Foreword“, in: H.U. Von Balthasar. *Cosmic Liturgy. The Universe According to Maximus the Confessor* (San Francisco, 2003), p. 1617.

Cm. Polycarp Sherwood, *An Annotated Date-List of the Works of Maximus the Confessor* (Roma, 1952). (*Studia Anselmiana* 30), 64 p.

8 Cm. Idem, *The Earlier Ambigua of Saint Maximus the Confessor and his Refutation of Origenism* (Roma, 1955). (*Studia Anselmiana* 36), 235 p. „

9 Cm. Lars Thunberg, *Microcosm and Mediator. The theological anthropology of Maximus the Confessor* (Lund, 1965). (*Acta Seminarii Neotestamentici Upsaliensis* 25), 500 p. Is traced from Plato through the Christian predecessors of Maxim (Nemesia, ps-Dionysius) to himself (r. 179-217). Special consideration is given to the psychology of the volitional act in the Maxim system, including the mechanism for making a volitional decision (pp. 220-243). The ethical doctrine of Maxim is analyzed (pp. 244-351); Attention is paid to the problem of universal separation and subsequent universal compounds (pp. 352-459). In 1985, another Thunberg research - Man

and Space - was published. Vision of the Holy. Maximus the Confessor. In him, absent in the previous work: Maxim's triple theology (r. 31-50), his soteriology (r. 51-70), the doctrine of God-manhood („the divine dimension“) (r. 71-92), socio- Ethical ideas (pp. 93-112), liturgical theology and ecclesiology (r. 113-130). The doctrine of Maximus about the „symbol“ and „sacraments“ is considered, and also its sources are analyzed (pp. 149-173).

Focus of the study of Walter Folker Maximus the Confessor as a mentor in the spiritual life (1965) 11 is directed to the moral and ascetic aspects of Maxims teaching: sin and the struggle against it with regard to ontology (r. 23-47), the concept of „the image of God“ (r. 69), as well as the nature and origin of sin (r. 102-135). The views of Maximus regarding the struggle against passions and attachment to the world (pp. 174-200), his understanding of spiritual life (pp. 201-222) are studied. Central to the study is the analysis of epistemology ^

Maxim. The category „gnosis / knowledge“, Maxim's terminology, as well as the conditions for the emergence of knowledge, are considered; Scripture and Tradition as the source of gnosis, the development of gnosis in its components, the category of „concentration“, „natural contemplation“ as an indispensable prerequisite for „God-seeing.“ With reference to the God-vision, the peculiarities of Maxim's understanding of such categories as „mysterious theology“ (direct theology), negative theology, „connection“ of the mind with God as a consequence of the God-seeing (r. 232-370) are revealed; Ascetic virtues are considered-humility, dispassion, love, concepts of spiritual life, prayer and deification (r. 371-490).

In the 1970s, three works were published, representing the view of Catholic theologians on the teachings of Maxim. In the study by Alain Riu Mir and the Church, in the teachings of Maxim the Confessor, the eschatology of Maxim the Confessor is considered, his doctrine of peace and man in pro

10 Cm. Lars Thunberg, Man and the Cosmos. The Vision of St Maximus the Confessor, with a Foreword by A. M. Allchin (Crestwood, New York: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1985), 184 p.

11 Cm. Walther Volker, Maximus Bekenner als Meister des geistlichen Lebens (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag GmbH, 1965). (In this connection, the Difficulty VII has been studied), the distinction between „logos-tropos“, the category of „new-building of nature“, „logos of what exists“ (r. 33-122), ekk-leziologiya (r. 123-200) is analyzed, 12. In the book of Juan Miguel Garriga Maxim Is

13 the teacher: love - the divine future of man explores the individual eschatological aspects of the teachings of Maxim, namely, the final state of human nature, as understood by the predecessors of Maxim (Evagrius, Gregory of Nyssa, ps. Dionysius), „the new order of nature“ as a way of existence of this (R. 83-107), ontological and anthropological implications of the doctrine of the divine adoption of man (r. 113-137), the problems of will and volitional act (r. 138-152), the category of charity in the teaching of Maxim (r. 153-200)). In the monograph of François Marie Letelles, Theology of the Gethsemane Battle of Christ. The human freedom of the Son of God and his soteriological significance in the illumination of Maximus the Confessor (1979) 14, the theological features of the teaching of Maximus the Confessor on the will and volitional act in the context of the christological disputes of the 7th c. An essay on Monophelite

teaching is given. In this connection, the passage from Gregory the Theologian {Word 30, 12, 1-33 Barbel) is analyzed that the Son is identical with the Father at will, and also the related problems are raised (r. 2935). The text of Psephos of Patriarch Sergius (June, 633), and its consequences and interpretation (pp. 36-58) are considered and commented on. An analysis of the teaching of Maximus the Confessor is conducted. It is said that initially Maxim was favored by Psephos (633-634). Considered how Maxim approached the problem in Opuscula 4 and 20. In this connection, the ontological difference between nature and hypostasis is discussed in Maxim. The solution of the problem, described by Maxim in Opuscula 6 (r. 59-106), is considered. The doctrine of Maximus on the freedom of human will in Christ (r. 107-122) and the three texts of Maxim relating to the Gethsemane wrestling are discussed.

Corroboration:

Tollefsen, Torstein; *The Christocentric Cosmology of St. Maximus the Confessor*; Oxford 2008

These summarized well-founded and relevant findings of Petrov, a Russian scholar, are discussed and evaluated in the context of Byzantine Neoplatonism being transformed in chapter 6 below. That is part two of the critical query. Petrov has found valuable points based on solid arguments.

Incidentally, the Russian dissertation system that was used for this query returned more than 1000 hits for the Russian search term “Byzantine philosophy”. Just from the first page of the results list, some of the titles read:

Traditions of Byzantine Neoplatonism in Russian Medieval Philosophy

Philosophical-dogmatic system of Sevillian of Antioch and its place in the history of Byzantine philosophical and theological thought

Anthropology of Gregory of Nyssa in the system of Byzantine culture

The place of Nikifor Grigor in the Byzantine anti-Latin polemics of the 30s. XIV century.

Philosophical premises of the ideology of Byzantine iconoclasm

If one considers the Byzantine-Arab dialogue of the Middle Ages for study, a parallel field is the Byzantine-Russian dialogue of the Middle Ages, for which there is much “gray” material available, even though Russian research is continuously ongoing.

04 St. John Damascene

- St. John Damascene; *Fountain of Wisdom*; various editions
- Wikipedia article, also: Wikipedia article on perichoresis
- Adrahtas, Vassilis; *John of Damascus*; in: Parry, Ken;/, pp. 293-306
- Campo Echevarría, Alberto del; *Transcendent Exemplarism and Immanent Realism in the Philosophical Work of John of Damaskos*; in: Sergei Mariev; Wiebke-Marie Stock (editors); *Aesthetics and Theurgy in Byzantium*; Berlin etc. 2013, pp. 127-142
- Glede, Benjamin; *The Development of the Term ἐνυπόστατος from Origen to John of Damascus*; Leiden, Boston 2012
- Himmerich, Maurice Fred; *Deification in John of Damascus*; PhD thesis, Marquette University 1985
- Kontouma, Vassa (editor); *John of Damascus, New Studies on his Life and Works*; Ashgate, Farnham, 2015
- ; article in *Encyclopedia of Ancient History*
- Louth, Andrew; *St John Damascene*; Oxford 2002
- Pallis, Dimitrios; *A Critical Presentation of the Iconology of St. John of Damascus in the Context of the Byzantine Iconoclastic Controversies*, in: *HeyJ* 56 (2015), pp. 173–191
- Payton, James R., Jr.; *John of Damascus on Human Cognition: An Element in His Apologetic for Icons*; in: *Church History*, volume 65, issue 2 (June 1996), pp. 173-183
- Romero Carrasquillo, Francisco J. *Aquinas' Reception of John of Damascus' (Mansūr Ibn Sarjūn) Philosophy of Religious Worship (Draft)*; Draft read at the Fall European Workshop of the Aquinas and the 'Arabs' International Working Group, held in Córdoba, Spain, June 20-21, 2016 (at academia.edu)
- Twombly, Charles C.; *Perichoresis and Personhood, God, Christ, and Salvation in John of Damascus*; (Princeton Theological Monograph Series Book 216); Eugene (Oregon) 2016
- Ward, Keith; *Christ and the Cosmos—A Reformulation of Trinitarian Doctrine*; New York 2015
- Ζογραφίδης, Γεωργίος; Βυζαντινή φιλοσοφία της εικόνας, Μία ανάγνωση του Ἰωάννη Δαμασκοῦ (Greek: Byzantine Philosophy of Icons, A Reading of John of Damascus); Athens 1997 (English summary at the end)
- Zografidis, George; *Aristotle and John of Damascus: The "first unmoved mover" and God-Creator*; in: Theresa Pentzopoulou-Valalas; Stylianos Dimopoulos (editors); *Aristotle on Metaphysics*; Thessaloniki 1999, pp. 201-221

There is a book in Byzantine philosophy that I find most impressive, that is Damascenos' book mentioned above, his *Fountain of Wisdom*. John, a polymath, priest and monk, lived c.675/676-749. He was a "well-educated Christian and high-rank official" (Adrahtas). He used more than a sprinkling of Aristotle's syllogistic logic, as a tool, to systematize what is today known as the Orthodox faith. The *Fountain of Wisdom*, his main writing, also a main work of Byzantine philosophy still readable today, likely dates from his later, Jerusalem period. It is a summary of the teachings of eastern Christianity. Adrahtas (p. 265) situates the book:

"Thus, the Jerusalem period was John Damascene's proper theological period, which gave rise to two substantial traditions of reception: a dogmatic-polemical one and a poetic-liturgical one. This was most likely due to the authority that *On the Orthodox Faith* eventually acquired, on the one hand, and the dominance that the genre of the liturgical Canon gradually achieved, on the other hand." (Note: *On the Orthodox Faith* is the third and last part of the *Fountain of Wisdom*.)

Not surprising for an author of such high standing, there are a number of works falsely attributed to him. He is described as an Arab named Mansūr Ibn Sarjūn, fluent in Arabic and immersed in Muslim society; “John of Damascus” was his religious name (Francisco J. Romero Carrasquillo). In his first or Damascus period, he doubtlessly straddled two worlds, giving him both an outsider and an insider perspective.

He was condemned post mortem in the intricacies of icon politics (754). Already Photious, however, stands witness to the authority John acquired. He was also noted approvingly by a great intellect, St. Thomas Aquinas, as shown by Aquinas’ reception of John of Damascus’ philosophy of religious worship. The logical syllogisms of his writing thus take on, in this context, liturgical functions of the higher mind.

John of Damascus wrote about the philosophy of icons. The concept of the icon as a religious device is predicated on the theory of ideas. Icons convey ideas and are more than mere art. In that sense, and using specific art techniques of gaze and sensory reduction, icons can spiritually open up the viewer to Plato’s divine realm of ideas. Michael Psellos reports such an incident, his encounter with the Theotokos.

Mansūr Ibn Sarjūn, who was John the Damascene, has been nicknamed a “Thomas Aquinas of the East”. Like St. Thomas, St. John was an encyclopedic summarizer. Unlike St. Thomas, St. John managed to digest his material into a single book (the *Fountain of Wisdom*), with a word count of an estimated less than ten percent of St. Thomas’ digest (the multi-volume *Summa Theologica*). To say less can be wise. What St. John’s epitome lacks in sheer mass, compared to that of his western colleague St. Thomas, it makes good in logical intensity and concept formation. Just as St. Thomas did not abstain from inventiveness, his eastern predecessor St. John improved his book with creations of his own, foremost, the elaboration of the key concept of perichoresis, a concept that was not new but now advanced to become the central container for St. John’s logical refinement. Thus, seen from a logical point of view, Chrysorrhoas succeeded in pinpointing the wisdom of eastern Christianity in a single concept, supported in its complexity by an appropriate semantic field as its periphery. His *Fountain of Wisdom* is a book that summarizes perichoresis. That is the essence of the wisdom of the Christian east.

The idea behind perichoresis is: mutual indwelling, interpenetration. That takes place at the soul level. It is mystic union with the Fourth Force of Creation, the Holy Spirit/Divine Love. There are many distracting trappings around this idea; the problem with them is to recognize that they are irrelevant complications thrown at one by one’s ego. Damascenos could not have written and spread his book without placing his main emphasis on the distracting elements. The study of his complex book to discover its simplicity is largely a study of its veiling distractions, and recognizing their irrelevance.

People do not actually have a problem to cut through to the simplicity. They have, in a life of distractions, a lifestyle problem of holding it. That is a culturally different background today, compared to reading St. John’s wisdom book back in the Byzantine period, especially in a monastic setting of minimized distraction.

05 The Platonic Theory of Ideas in Byzantium

Campo Echevarría, Alberto del; *La teoría Platónica de las ideas en Bizancio (ss. V-XI): Principios, desarrollo e inversión final de la ontología clásica* [Spanish: The Platonic Theory of Ideas in Byzantium (centuries V-XI): Principles, Development and Final Version of Classical Ontology]; Madrid 2010
-----; *La teoría platónica de las Ideas en Bizancio (ss. IX-XI)*; Madrid 2012 (book publication of the above)
-----; *La indagación filosófica Bizantina acerca de los universales*; in: *Erytheia*, volume 33, 2012, pp. 57-86
Helmig, Christoph; *Forms and Concepts, Concept Formation in the Platonic Tradition*; Berlin, Boston 2012
Лурье, В.М.; *История Византийской философии, Библиотека духовной науки* (Russian: History of Byzantine Philosophy, A Formative Period); Axioma 2006, pdf online:
http://bdn-steiner.ru/modules/Books/files/Lurye_ist_visant_philosoph.pdf

This chapter is a collective review of the three aforementioned books. Also, this chapter is a specialized continuation of chapter 2 above. In a basic sense, I disagree with all three books because they fail to mention the Platonic practice of ideas (see below in chapter 6). That aside, these are three great and ground-breaking books of research for the foundations of a history of Byzantine philosophy.

Alberto del Campo Echevarría

ABSTRACT: From the ninth century onward, we find in Byzantium a series of statements on the nature of Platonic Ideas which comes to be a pioneer philosophical effort in respect of the Latin medieval controversy on universals. Byzantines systematically vindicate a “realistic conceptualism” which is opposed to both the “realism” of Plato and to the “nominalism” of Antisthenes. As a consequence of this, they get the Ancient Medioplatonic and Patristic exemplarism rebuked, even when it had survived *cuiusque genere* inside the Middle Platonism and the Patristic thought.

KEYWORDS: Neoplatonism, Byzantine Philosophy, Medieval Philosophy, Universals, Concept, Idea, Dialectic.

Campo Echevarría’s findings match what other researchers confirm. On the question of the universals, the Byzantines held a third position, not in the grid of realism/nominalism (with a total of around five theories). Tatakis called this “mystical realism”. Functionally, the issue is the same that is described by V.V. Petriv in his Russian study, using older insights, as shown in chapter 3 above. The book by Campo Echevarría goes to a great, even extreme, length to demonstrate this, using practically all known Byzantine source material from the fifth to the eleventh centuries. The 2012 paper in *Erytheia* is a detailed Spanish summary of the book. The abstract was taken from it.

On pages 618-662 of the 2010 dissertation, Echevarría presents his Conclusions. My opinion of the entire matter is that Plato’s theory of ideas was never fully understood. For example, there is no known Byzantine commentary on the subject matter, no academic book published as we know it today. Even today, the question remains a very difficult one. It was not Echevarría’s goal to prove that the Byzantines had a good operational understanding of how ideas work. Those who dealt with the issue erected a conceptual construct. That is a high intellectual achievement of the eastern Middle Ages. Altogether, the great Byzantine innovation

is as delineated in chapters 3 above, and 5 below. That is what I wish to bring over by my subtitle: God & Platonic Idea Practice. It does match the finding of a third way in the problem of universals.

Christoph Helmig

Helmig deals with Plato and Aristotle for the first 140 pages of his book. That is well advised, since their writings were never matched, and to this day remain essential reading to understand the questions.

Helmig then turns to the Platonic tradition, as his book title promises. Up to page 262, his writing is advanced philological work on Neoplatonist theories that does not generate any particular flight of the mind. Then, however, on page 263, he deals with Proklos' (Proclus') "Platonic theory of concept attainment". The soul has innate knowledge, then forgets it, and then can regain it. The object of the innate knowledge is, apparently, Plato's heaven of ideas. Man comes from there, falls into Creation, and then remembers who she/he truly is. That is a perennial subject of intelligently inquisitive spirituality. What there is to that over and above dry letter does not in any way become clear, however.

Вадим Миронович Лурье
Vadim Mironovich Lurié

Vadim Mironovich Lurié, the author of the thick Russian book at the head of this chapter, has his own lengthy Russian Wikipedia entry, apparently written by himself (per 2017-04-16), https://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/%D0%9B%D1%83%D1%80%D1%8C%D0%B5,%D0%92%D0%B0%D0%B4%D0%B8%D0%BC_%D0%9C%D0%B8%D1%80%D0%BE%D0%BD%D0%BE%D0%B2%D0%B8%D1%87

The naming of the article is disputed, since the first names of Lurié have variations.

The book came about with the participation of VA Baranov.

In 2008, at the Faculty of Philosophy and Political Science, he defended his doctoral thesis on "Transformation of the Aristotelian Ontology in the Byzantine theological discussions of the 6th-7th centuries."

His list of academic activities including positions on editorial boards is large and impressive. He holds no professorship.

The findings of Lurié concerning the theory of ideas (problem of universals) are criticized by a reviewer,

Biriukov, Dmitry; [review of Lourié, book in Serbian]; in: *Universa. Recension di filosofia*, Anno 2, Vol. 2, 2013, pp. nn. (at academia.edu)

The reviewer writes:

On the basis of L. Benakis, Lourié comes to the conclusion that moderate realism (with some occasional inclinations to nominalism) was the general trend in the understanding of universals in Byzantine philosophy. According to Lourié, this position was definitively codified in the Byzantine philosophical thought through the School of Ammonius of Alexandria, which was influential for the Christians (p.82). In our view, this claim is not entirely correct, since starting with Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite (*De div. nom.* V3, 5-6), the concept of the hierarchy of the universal principles underlying created beings, was introduced. This hierarchical structure implied the understanding of universals in the sense of traditional realism. Pseudo-Dionysius took this concept from Proclus (*Instit. Theol.* 101; *Theol. Plat.* 3,3,131); following Dionysius it was taken up by Maximus the Confessor (*Amb. VII: PG* 91, 1080A-B), John of Damascus (*Exp.*

fidei 4 XIII 86), Gregory Palamas (Particip. IX–XI, Dial. orthod. et Barl. XLVII; Acind. V, 27; De un. et dist. XVI), and other Byzantine writers. Thus, we may say that at least two ways of interpreting universals co-existed in Byzantine philosophy – moderate realism and “traditional” realism.

I am not in a position to verify how ably Lurié argues his contrary finding. Any striking arguments would likely have been mentioned by the reviewer in the five page review.

06 The Byzantine Transformations of Neoplatonism

On the face of it, there is an indelible suspicion that Neoplatonism was a powerful and essentially secretive organization within ancient Greek society. Dominic O'Meara says as much, pointing to a hot rivalry. The Neoplatonists were threatened existentially by the upsurge of Christianity. Nearly as predictable as the laws of gravity, the laws of power would have them come up with a cunning defence strategy. That is probably what we are facing without being able to learn details. The crisis that Digeser has informed us about could well have been orchestrated as part of such a stratagem. Porphyrios and his student Iamblichos would, most likely, have made a good team, unless their difference of opinion was actually based in a rift between the two personalities, an assumption that may be as likely as not but remains speculative. That would tend to the conclusion that Digeser's pre-Gospel crisis was in fact orchestrated in order to achieve a life extension for Neoplatonism as a ruling force of Greek society. One thing is made certain by the history of Byzantine philosophy, namely, that Neoplatonism ushered in the "Christian" empire, and when, some 1100 years later, the eastern empire sagged and deteriorated, Neoplatonism again was standing and was a major contributor of the culture transfer to Italy and the entire Renaissance west, by a however narrow margin missing the chance to maneuver a Byzantine, Cardinal Bessarion, student of Plethon, into high office as pope. The intrigue, never clarified, smells of a sophisticated intelligence action typical for a large power apparatus. Then there was Giordano Bruno, a writer of dialogues sounding in Neoplatonism, hounded by the Inquisition and burned at the stake for motives that were never plausibly revealed.

The caption of this chapter is as specific as it was possible to render. The larger context, obviously is delineated by the descriptors "Platonism" and "history of Platonism". The word "Platonism" occurs in the caption of this chapter in the composite noun, "Neoplatonism". Platonism, most generally, involves schools, and additionally, non-school styles, of ideas. Platonism is one of the most influential, and also one of the most pervasive and subtle, among intellectual and spiritual movements on the planet. As far as schools are concerned, Aristotle and his school (called: Peripatos, or, Lykeon) always were to a significant part Platonic. Plato was the teacher of Aristotle in classical Athens. Plato (Platonos) lived 428/427 B.C.-348/347 B.C. Aristotle lived c.384 B.C.-c.322 B.C. The main teacher-companion of Plato was Sokrates of Athens. The period of Greek philosophy before them is, in the history books, called the period of the "Pre-Socratics".

There is considerable argument in intellectual history what the individual positions of Plato and his most famous and influential student Aristotle were and are. Both Plato and Aristotle are still being studied today for their intelligence and writings. One important point is that a history of Platonism without a history of the Aristotelism of the subject period is incomplete, since both strands are supplementary but not identical.

Sokrates, Plato and Aristotle were the first idealists in the history of human thinking. They are often called the classical Athenian philosophers. Plato's philosophy, developed after his teacher Sokrates who left no writings, is the most radical idealism in the history of human thinking. Aristotle's general main contribution is to give legs to Plato's idealism through empirical studies (such as: of animals, of state constitutions, of the weather, of economics, of psychology, etc.).

I have analyzed, from a modern perspective, and with a strong emphasis on Byzantine themes, the radical core of idealism in my vol. 3 (see list of my books at archive.org above in the frontmatters). The key ideas are there in the first chapter, "On Ideation". Since that is a modern summation, that is not historical Platonism, nor is it historical Aristotelianism. It is my platform of understanding, distilled into a chapter format. I hold that it conveys the essential idea of idealism.

The first misleading thought may be, that idealism is just some kind of classifier for libraries. That is not the case. Idealism is the study of ideas, which are empirical realities in the mind. Human beings can relate, even meaningfully, to ideas. Ideas are actually something of foremost importance, since ideas form the basis of human economy and well-being. Inventions, for example, for which state patent offices around the globe award patents, represent, together with real estate holdings (latter including without limitation, mines and agricultural fields), the dominant part of human planetary asset value. Depending on forms of organization, an economy can function without money, but it cannot function (above paleolithic levels) without ideas. Even winning wars among relatively equal parties depends largely on ideas. The history of science, medicine and technology comes almost entirely, in the essence, from ideas. Etc.

What are ideas? That is exactly the question that Sokrates, Plato and Aristotle set out to explore and to answer in classical Athens in the fifth and fourth centuries B.C. Their answers, and the philosophical work of their many thousands of intelligent followers through the ages, have built a timeless wisdom (and many time-bound solutions with later became mistakes through ongoing development) around ideas.

One distinction, important for the context of this book, becomes clear when one studies these thinkers and their impact on civilization: Ideas are not the same as strong energies out in nature. That is the hardest point to understand. This book shines some light on this key distinction.

Since this direct question is so difficult to answer, an indirect approach has been developed, namely concerning the human relationship with ideas. How can human beings relate to ideas? That indirect approach is usually where the play is for philosophers and intellectual historians who study this is.

Ideas are ultra-weak energies, practically speaking: non-energies, inside humans, especially when humans think. Human beings relate to ideas through thinking. That is the timeless standard answer to the question that is posed by the indirect approach. Their most sophisticated solution, a very technical solution, is by Aristotle, who gave to the world syllogistic logics. In the history of inventions, of course, we see frequently that ideas come “as they wish” to an inventor, sometimes strangely to several unrelated inventors around the same time period, and even more strangely, sometimes through funny coincidences that have nothing to do with logics and thinking. That latter aspect has become quite strikingly apparent in modern times.

The greatest value that humans can build is to find out what this is about.

Thinking is an internal activity. Plato tells us in his many writings, which survived the ages down to our times, directly and descriptively what ideas are. They have an own realm. There is a central idea that Plato calls the idea of the Good. Plato uses psycho-analytically powerful metaphors to bring his point over, for example, the metaphor of the cave. In modern diction, the point is that humans in their present form are not particularly fit to deal with ideas. The good news is that there are ways and means how to make oneself more fit to deal with ideas.

In the classical tradition, the philosopher as a sage is an idea worker. She or he is an “energy worker” (modern term from free spirituality) to the extent that this serves the ulterior goal to become an idea worker.

In meditative terms, idea work is meditative work of man’s ninth body or Light-Body. That is the level of the Akhu (see in vol. 2). Successful idea work is the result of advanced spirituality, and of spiritual contact.

Enough of that brief introduction into classical idealism, seen from a modern analytical view. In the balance of this chapter, I wish to outline the institutional history of Byzantine Neoplatonism. There were three major transformations, namely:

- the closing of the Platonic Academy in Athens,
- the appearance of Dionysios Areopagita and his influential reception in Byzantine Theology, and
- the resurgence of Platonism through Plethon.

The particularly complex reception of individual Neoplatonists has been well researched in one case especially, namely, Proklos, and shall also be discussed. The reception of platonic motives as an overall literary phenome-

non in Byzantium is still understudied and has not yet generated research sufficient for discussion here, save the remark that the influence of Neoplatonism on Byzantine intellectual life was widespread.

Platonism in late antiquity and in Byzantium is a dynamic field of ongoing research. In light of that, there is no standard history book presenting the institutional development, since any history depends not merely upon the facts but also on interpretations of the facts (whatever a “fact” may be).

Byzantine Neoplatonism up to the Closing of the Platonic Academy in Athens

The Platonic Academy in Athens shut its doors under pressure from emperor Justinian in 529 A.D. This is frequently quoted. It was not the end of Neoplatonism, or of the transmission of Plato’s writings. A major recent publication on Neoplatonism such as the *Routledge Handbook of Neoplatonism* (2014) avoids placing much focus on historical questions, dealing, instead, with the ideas and content of what Neoplatonism was. This is reflected by its section headings under which the individual chapters are organized:

Part I: (Re-)Sources, Instruction and Interaction

Part II: Methods and Styles of Exegesis

Part III: Metaphysics and Metaphysical Perspectives

Part IV: Language, Knowledge, Soul and Self

Part V: Nature: Physics, Medicine and Biology

Part VI: Ethics, Political Theory and Aesthetics

Part VII: Legacy

Any reader who wants to learn the content of early Byzantine philosophy of the Neoplatonic school(s), a major part of Byzantine philosophy, will have to study the *Routledge Handbook*. It is of such a nature and so voluminous that it cannot be summarized here. As for the influence of Indian philosophy, I refer to my vol. 1. As for the lasting influence of Neoplatonism, see next heading. As for the “pagan” nature of Neoplatonism, that is an open question if one follows the scholarship of radical criticism referenced in chapter 1 above.

Platonism is a name for teachings that somehow relate to the classical Athenian philosopher Plato, but are not identical with his philosophy. No variant of Platonism ever reaches the intellectual and spiritual sophistication of the classical master. The intellectual history of Platonism is the history of such differences and still remains to be written. Its utility after a tremendous research effort of decades would likely remain questionable. If scholars of Byzantine philosophy were ever to engage on such a study of Platonism varieties seriously, it would be a comparative effort among reduced and diluted versions of Plato’s original thought. Today, there is monographic coverage of probably every major Neoplatonist since the inception of the school. As far as the wisdom content is concerned, reference is made to the *Routledge Handbook* (hardback edition: 644 pages).

The Appearance of Dionysios Areopagita and His Influence in Byzantine Theology

It is widely accepted by scholars that the corpus of Dionysios Areopagita, an anonymous author, is predominantly Neoplatonic. The effect of the Dionysian corpus was that Neoplatonism took a strong and lasting foothold in Byzantine theology, beginning with the issue of a viable theological methodology. The theology, as it settled in Byzantium, thus became a set of wisdom writings defined institutionally by authorship through clerics, but additionally to a significant extent, methodologically by construction through Dionysian methods, such as the triads, still in the employ of theological writing during the age of St. Gregory Palamas. As described in this book up to the end of chapter 1, the main texts for theological exegesis were the Platonic Gospels of the Constantinian NT.

There is much scholarship on Dionysios Areopagita, his possible identity (my opinion: Damascios), and his influence. Their summary is that Dionysios was highly influential for the development of dogma of Christian theology.

Byzantine philosophy was unable to amend the intellectual content of the philosophy of Plato. That holds true also for Plato's theory of ideas. However, in Byzantium the intellectually challenging spiritual system of Plato was redrafted for the common lay person. Neoplatonism with its emanation, and in particular the Dionysian system with its hierarchies and triads, was like a Walt Disney enactment of Plato's theory of ideas, like a powerfully hypnotic theme park.

The principle, briefly explained in my vol. 1, is ekphrasis, the mental visualization technique from ancient rhetorics and art theory. Plato's theory of ideas was supplemented with a practice of ideas, which is the Neoplatonist, and Dionysian-Neoplatonist, layer of Platonic development. Byzantines were held in the mental vize of its golden splendour well into the second half of the Byzantine millennium. Then, however, we see educated proto-humanists in the wake of Patriarch Photios, people who are coming out of the hypnotic theme park transformed (chapter 9 below).

This (I would like to say) revelation on Saturday, 2017-04-15 (day before Easter Sunday) came down in the form of lightful golden images like from the heaven of ideas. It presupposes that, starting with Dionysios, the Neoplatonic school went into its second stage, under the cloak of Byzantine theology, based on the four Platonic Gospels in Constantine's NT.

The key principle of the Dionysian Neoplatonic school is to open a sacred space of inner vision. This is what the triadic method of Dionysios the (Pseudo-)Areopagite does. In that space, visual spirit contacts can take place. It is like an Olymp or Empyrean. It requires meditative quietude. The Byzantine church ritual was geared towards that. Byzantine icons can be powerful tools in opening and sustaining such inner sacred space. When we are studying Byzantine theology, we are studying the wisdom and operative knowledge of that Platonic idea practice.

The "trick" was based on a profound and apparently very ancient knowledge of aesthetics and theurgy. Specifically, a mental tilt took place through the Dionysian ecclesiology, which led to projecting a mental church as a celestial sacred space. Hans Urs Von Balthasar understood this, in his study of Maximos the Confessor, as a "Cosmic Liturgy" (cf. chapter 3 above). A recent volume uses the concept of "theurgy":

Mariev, Sergei; Stock Wiebke-Marie (editors); *Aesthetics and Theurgy in Byzantium*; Berlin etc. 2013
Stock, Wiebke-Marie; *Theurgisches Denken, Zur Kirchlichen Hierarchie des Dionysios Areopagita* (German: Theurgic Thinking, On the Ecclesiastical Hierarchy of Dionysios the Areopagite); Berlin, New York 2008

Dmitri Biriukov stakes out the main lineage of the cryptic Dionysian-Neoplatonist school:

Biriukov, Dmitri; *Hierarchies of Beings in the Patristic Thought: Maximus the Confessor, John of Damascus, and the Palamites*; in: *Scrinium, Journal of Patrology, Critical Hagiography and Ecclesiastical History*, volume 10, 2014, pp. 275-300

This links in a chain the chapters 3, 4, 10, and 11 of this book, joining important aspects into a lineage that was, in the Byzantine period, carefully kept covert, with good reason, as the later examples of John Italos, George Gemistos Plethon, and, in Italy, Giordano Bruno show vis-à-vis the Church's assassin branch. Further links to be established should include the very careful Photios, St. Symeon the New Theologian, his pupil Niketas Stethatos, their pupil (Frederick Lauritzen) Michael Psellos, and his uncautious pupil John Italos. In Persia, the connection presumably included Sohrevardi the Illuminationist who was judicially assassinated.

The tensions that Sohrevadi the Illuminationist must have generated are illustrated, in modern day, by the appearance of Ayatollah Khomeini in Iran, a proponent of classical Zoroastrian Illuminationism from the pre-ancient post-Atlantean Zoroastrian Empire that rivalled the Osirian Empire. See for a modern exposé (key words: Sohrevardi, light, angels, Zoroastrianism, illumination, Light of Lights):

<http://jsstm-ump.org/2015%20Volume%203,Issue%203,Supp%201/74-82.pdf>

In slogan form, this radical dualistic theology says, God is Light.

An illustrative digression:

Adib-Moghaddam, Arshin; *A Critical Introduction to Khomeini*; New York 2014

Moin, Baqer; *Khomeini, Life of the Ayatollah*; New York 1999

The Resurgence of “Platonism” through Plethon

See, on George Gemistos Plethon, my treatment in my vol. 3, with citations of literature. Plethon was a Platonist. Whether he should be considered a “Neoplatonist” is doubtful at best. He stands alone as a late witness to otherwise lost Hellenic knowledge and wisdom, with indications of much theurgic knowledge, such as locations and calendar dates for apparitional contacts with gods like Athena (probably similar to the famous Zeitoun apparitions etc., category: Marian apparitions). He was influential for the migration of Platonism to the west and for the founding of the Platonic Academy of Marsilius Ficino in Florence.

A Reception Study of Proklos

There is discussion of part of the edited volume by Stephen Gersh below in chapter 9.

07 Patriarch Photios

A Russian website lauds: “Saint Photius, Patriarch of Constantinople, ‘the Church’s far-gleaming beacon’ ”. <http://www.pravoslavie.ru/english/print100943.htm> The same Photios/Photius has no own chapter in the recent Wiley Blackwell Companion to Patristics even though he is frequently mentioned throughout. It is near impossible to extract coherent information about him from academic systems, despite his epithet “the Great”. Even Russian information as far as available to me is practically not there.

In this situation, with the permission of Holy Cross Orthodox Press, the first chapter of a 234 page book with basic information has been placed online at: <http://www.photius.com/photios>

White, Despina Stratoudaki; *Patriarch Photios of Constantinople, His Life, Scholarly Contributions, and Correspondence, Together with a Translation of Fifty-two of His Letters*; Brookline 1981

A reviewer (AmazonCustomer) writes:

D.S. White accomplishes the feat of a concise, complete and readable presentation of a complicated man who is a Saint to the East, anathema to the West, and the most extraordinary and illustrious mind of his time. Saint Photios of Constantinople, “an intimate of the powerful, a courtier, an intellectual, an encyclopedist, a teacher, and a voracious student of anything that books could offer”, has been extensively studied by scholars for centuries; profusely quoted and catalogued, worshiped and excommunicated. But nowhere does he come through as completely yet understandably as he does in this small book. Photios’s own writings, presented here in a collection of 52 of his letters, reveal a man of passion and compassion, great knowledge and deep faith who still brings forth our admiration, even as he continues to attract the scorn of those he called “heretics” over a thousand years ago.

There also older studies about Photios of a similar foundational type (French: Jean Nicolas Jager 1844; German: Joseph Hergenröther, 3 vols., 1867-1869). Georgi Kapriev; / p. 151 at the outset of his chapter on Photios summarizes that interest has been invested solely into Photios the ecclesiastical politician. His significant intellectual weight, however, is being left aside. Poignantly, Kapriev launches a dart (my English translation):

The position and the role of Photios in the intellectual history of Byzantium to this day have not yet been researched thoroughly. In nearly all efforts, interest remains restricted to the anti-Latin writings, which, even not counting the Bibliothek and the letters, make up only four percent of his oeuvre.

Photios’ influence, which is unanimously assessed as considerable and lasting, may have utilized means and forms that make it difficult to pin him down. This reminds me of the difficulty of defining what “humanism” is or does. Also, in societies with strict and lethal censorship, changes practically always utilize precautionary evasiveness in order to stay below the radar screen. Such preemptive safety devices are: advanced literary and rhetorical skills, migration of meaning to connotation, body language, connoted facial expressions through direct or implied metaphor, situational juxtapositions, etc. from the bimillennial treasure chest of Greek

poetic and rhetorical skills. Was this the light that Photios shined? Like many prominent Byzantine figures, he was successful in being deposed, and then also, in returning. He is perhaps best remembered for smacking (connotationally) the Roman pope in the “filioque” fraud quabble, and causing a mid-size schism. By comparison, Patriarch Photios I the Great of Constantinople may have been Byzantium’s Voltaire.

Dvornik, Francis; *The Photian Schism. History and Legend*; Cambridge 1948

The main works of Photios are the *Myriobiblion* (or *Bibliothēke*), a set of notes from reading the classics, both pagan and Christian. This has preserved many passages otherwise lost. The second massive work is his *Lexicon*, important for our detailed knowledge of Byzantine language. Apart from that, he was a productive letter writer. This overview shows that Photios strived, and evidently attained, a particularly high degree of literacy, and also, that he wrote nothing like a systematic history, theology, or philosophy. He was twice the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople, leader of the Church (858-867, 877-886). The Orthodox Churches recognize Photios as a Saint and allow him the epithet “the Great”.

Joseph Hergenröther, the German researcher in the nineteenth century, started in 1854 to collect all the writings of Photios. From then, it took him fifteen years to finish his massive three volume study of Photios, that, strangely, stands to this day as the leading Photios monograph in any language (as far as I can see), and (nearly?) as the only one of significant scholarly depth that is adequate to the person described.

Hergenröther, Josef; / (see in Bibliographic Reduction above)

-----; *Monumenta Graeca ad Photium ejusque historiam pertinentia*; Ratisbonae 1869

Josef Hergenröther (1824-1890) was a Catholic church historian and a Cardinal, with access to the Vatican archives. See his English Wikipedia entry: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joseph_Hergenr%C3%B6ther In his short list of works, his main life-work, that on Photios, is conspicuously absent. It is mentioned in the list of works in his German Wikipedia entry. (2017-04-11) (Spelling sometimes: Joseph ~.)

There is a voluminous German PhD thesis on the exegetical method of Photios, <http://d-nb.info/811032841>

Additionally, I have looked into Russian gray material. For example, via machine translation, I read two short paragraphs from <http://studentbank.ru/view.php?id=36639> The message from Russia came over to me thus:

Introduction

St. Photius, Patriarch of Constantinople, lived in the IX century, came from a family of zealous Christians. His father died a martyr’s death for the protection of icons. St. Photius received a brilliant education and, in a kinship with the Imperial House, served as the first Secretary of State in the Senate. Contemporaries spoke of him: “He was so much different in almost all secular sciences that he could rightly be considered the glory of his age and could even argue with the ancients.” He was taught by the young heir to the throne Michael and the future educator of the Slavs, Equal-to-the-Apostles Cyril. Deep Christian piety protected St. Photius from the delusion of the benefits of court life - with all his heart he strove for monasticism.

Saint Patriarch Photius was one of the first expositors of the West in these heretical deviations, proving their absurdity. About the filioque he wrote several brilliant apologetic works. St. Photius, being a defender of the truth and a reprover of untruth, informed the Eastern Church

about the affairs of the Pope with the District Message, pointing to the retreat of the Roman Church from ancient Orthodoxy not only in rituals, but also in religion. In it, he cited up to 40 logical arguments against the Latin delusion. The Council was convened, condemning the willfulness of the West.

The foregoing quote from Russian gray literature on Photios shows that the polemical mode has not yet been retired. I would agree insofar as the quote, by way of example, gives readers a good feel for the polemical mode that is actually very close to historicity of Photios' own time. Since I am not a Photios specialist, I do not feel qualified to provide more coverage here in a situation where scholarship is to all practical effects mostly blocked for whatever reasons. When more truth (of the refined kind) is out at some future time, we might well end up concluding that Voltaire was the French Photios.

A start of good Photios research is:

Matula, Jozef; article, in Lagerlund, *Encyclopedia of Medieval Philosophy*

I read Photios somewhat differently. There are statements by Photios on philosophy, but they do not show that he had any particular grasp of the subject except for purposes of learned conversation. He rejected the Platonic theory of ideas, essentially because God has no need for ideas (mentioned in Matula, *supra*, citing *Amphilochia*, q.77). Why would God then create ideas? Or are they uncreated? Nothing is followed up, but the conversation is pleasant. Photios criticizes Plato for Plato's rejection of rhetoric and poetry, but remains unresponsive to Plato's arguments. Those details characterize Photios' position as that of a philosophically shallow and/or intangible persona of outstanding brilliance. Accordingly, Photios' main interest in philosophy was in logics and dialectics, which were, for Aristotle, not part of philosophy but merely tools of thinking. Photios was the renewer of classical learning in Byzantium, his lasting achievement. Photios' commentary *Amphilochia* on Aristotle's *Categories* is a key document for the history of Byzantine philosophy and theology but is of the same shallow but brilliant conversational brand. None of this can be seen as a shortcoming in character, however, since Photios remained faithful to the Orthodox doctrine that it was his office to defend, and he refuted the Roman papal "Filioque" attack on the eastern view of the Trinity (which I am not hereby agreeing with in any way).

Another piece of good Photios research, whetting my appetite for more, is:

Louth, Andrew; *Photios as a theologian*; in: Elizabeth M. Jeffreys (editor); *Byzantine Style, Religion and Civilization, In Honor of Sir Steven Runciman*; Cambridge 2006, pp. 203-226

Louth comments on the deplorable situation of Photios research (p. 203): "Photios was, as already remarked, the most learned man of his age, and must have played some part in the revival of learning in Byzantium in the mid-ninth century, but exactly what role is unclear."

In terms of historical importance on the stage of world events, the intellectual question that stands out most prominently in Photios' career as Patriarch of Constantinople is his retutation of the inventive Filioque proposal of the Roman pope. Louth summarizes: "In his relations with Rome, he is one of the first - certainly the first of whom we know anything much - to make the question of the nature of the Spirit's procession within the Godhead an issue between eastern and western Christendom, an issue of such gravity as to lead him to accuse the west of heresy for asserting that the Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son - the *Filioque*." (p. 204) Comment SG: Since, in the fabulous anti-rational "Trinity", the third person is the Spirit, what is this discussion about, anyhow? If the Spirit *is* the third person, why does it need to "proceed" from any of the other persons? This is silly stuff for morons; and Photios rightly said about as much.

Writing this, I get upset. I feel this gets me emotionally disqualified to continue this chapter by my own writing. So that this chapter may not end left partly bland, I hope that an excellently researched Wikipedia article (retrieved 2017-04-13) may whet the curiosity of the reader. I refer to the following attached document, overleaf.

08 Michael Psellos

The type of Michael Psellos' activity, not merely as a philosopher or theologian, but as an encyclopedist and organizer as Aristotle, plus rhetorical feats of synthesizing wide-ranging bulk knowledge, had a prehistory in middle Byzantium (in addition, Psellos was also a statesman):

Magdalino, Paul; *10 Byzantine encyclopaedism of the ninth and tenth centuries*; in: König, Jason; Woolf, Greg (editors); *Encyclopaedism from Antiquity to the Renaissance*; New York 2013, pp. 219-231

For the multiple Psellos personas that dominated the stage, I refer especially to my book-length encyclopedia type article, pdf, 147 pages, written from to 2015-09-30 (my vol. 5), free at archive.org:

SG; *Michael Psellos and the Method of Illumination*

My overview book covers all the major documentable personas of the savant-politician, obviously not a savant-autist. Bibliographic references see, supra. The method of illumination first became the subject of a book-length discussion six decades ago, an early starting shot for research on Byzantine philosophy, in:

Joannou, Perikles; *Christliche Metaphysik in Byzanz. I. Die Illuminationslehre des Michael Psellos und Ioannes Italos* [German: Christian Metaphysics in Byzantium, I. The Theory of Illumination of Michael Psellos and Ioannes Italos]; Ettal 1956

That book is based on the main manuscript of the writings of Psellos and, in its details, is no longer up to par. The method of illumination, however, is properly seen as a key to Psellos the philosopher. A brand new German volume with all the known facts and a systematic presentation of Psellos' philosophical thought is:

Walter, Denis; *Michael Psellos: Christliche Philosophie in Byzanz* (German: Michael Psellos, Christian Philosophy in Byzantium); Berlin, Boston 2017

Psellos' method of illumination, going back to ancient methods of textual elucidation, stands as a main example of the continuing Johannine turn of Byzantine philosophy, bathing the mentally perceived in the non-physical light of the Logos, and thereby opening the transcendent realm, in accordance with the function of the philosopher according to Plato and to the more technical account in Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, book 10, the complement of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, book lambda, in practical philosophy, preforming the fourteenth century mainstream Hesychasm since classical Athens. What was added to the dry letter of classical theoretical and practical metaphysics was the Christian exemplification and the drama of the Hesychast Controversy. With a grain of salt (or two), Byzantium was in its entirety a commentary on the most difficult philosophical theorems of Aristotle, foremost, his heavenly Organon viewpoint of ultimate reality, the World of the Light of Divine Rays, Tabor Light, or Great Ether of Paradise in the Fourth Force.

Not discussed in my 2015 Psellos write-up is the exegetical work of Linos Benakis on the commentary that Michael Psellos wrote on Aristotle's *Physike* (natural philosophy, more than just "physics"). Here, I would like to focus on Psellos the philosophical commentator, and how he implemented the method of illumination for

this. Ideally, the point to be explored is that the method of illumination serves not merely to illuminate, mentally, a text or a philosophy, but a human individual, for spiritual enlightenment. Also, the example shows that Psellos was by no means fixated only, or even preeminently, on Proklos (Proclus) as is usually held.

- Benakis, Linos G.; *Studien zu den Aristoteles-Kommentaren des Michael Psellos, Erster Teil, Ein unedierter Kommentar zur Physik des Aristoteles von Michael Psellos* (German: Studies on the Aristotle Commentaries of Michael Psellos, First Part, An Unedited Commentary to the *Physis* of Aristotle by Michael Psellos); originally published in: *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie*, volume 43, 1961, pp. 215-238
 -----; *Studien zu den Aristoteles-Kommentaren des Michael Psellos, Zweiter Teil, Die aristotelischen Begriffe Physis, Materie, Form nach Michael Psellos* (German: Studies on the Aristotle Commentaries of Michael Psellos, Second Part, The Aristotelian Concepts *Physis*, Matter, Form after Michael Psellos); in: *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie*, volume 44, 1962, pp. 33-61
 -----; *Michael Psellos' Kritik an Aristoteles und seine eigene Lehre zur „Physis“ und „Materie/Form“-Problematik* (German: Michael Psellos's Criticism of Aristotle and His Own Theory on "Physis" and the "Matter/Form" Problem); in: *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, volume 56, issue 2, 1963, pp. 213-227

With the foregoing philosophical inquiries into Michael Psellos, Linos Benakis strikes to the core of the Aristotelian concept of nature. Nineteenth century Neoscholasticism named the problem "hylomorphism". Aristotle construes nature (Greek word, confusingly: *physis*, but more than just "physics", namely including life) as dualistic from form (*morphe*) and matter (*hyle*, basic meaning "wood" and adopted by Aristotle with a specialized technical meaning). The medieval Aristotelian world view of the advanced Scholastics was hylomorphic. Thomas Aquinas presents, naming God profusely, the atheist universe limited to Aristotle's natural philosophy with multiple divine energies that is a closed hylomorphic system. This world view is spiritually highly advanced, but it is not an absolute truth. Michael Psellos in commenting Aristotle did not, of course, miss the point, but sees the Aristotelian structure and notes some of his own critical comments.

There is a number of recent interesting philosophical publications on hylomorphism. The overall drift is that early modern science gradually departed from Aristotelian hylomorphic natural philosophy, with the underlying deep issue being, that the closed system approach was found to be problematic in several aspects (life, theology being the main). Well into the twentieth century, thermodynamics continued to use the closed system approach, but this has been now also falsified through quantum physics with closed systems no longer possible in the quantum view of interconnectedness (the "de-materialization of matter"). The opposite of interconnectedness is, classically, atomism ("atomos" meaning, "indivisible").

Brower, Jeffrey E.; *Aquinas's Ontology of the Material World, Change, Hylomorphism, and Material Objects*; Oxford 2014

McMullin, Ernan (editor); *The Concept of Matter*; Notre Dame 1963

The increased study of medieval philosophy since several decades has helped to clarify the issues. We may note, historically, that Psellos was prior to Aquinas in holding a hylomorphic view. However, Aquinas relied on Aristotle and never claimed total originality. Commentators on Aristotle's physics had carried this tradition on since Aristotle's times, a tradition that was kept alive through Byzantine and also through Islamic transmissions. Hylomorphism is still of value today for spiritual critique of science. Of Aristotle's Four Causes (very ancient Four Forces, with their synthetic fifth or quintessence, of very old symbolized by the swastika), only the first is material/entropic. The three higher ones give eutropic self-organization, an open challenge to our science. Ethically, man's task is to orient her/his life in the range of the Four Forces, which spells out, functionally, freedom of the will, under Aristotle's concept of "telos", an individual's quintessential imprint.

09 *Philosophical Commentaries in Later Byzantium*

Byzantium was either the largest and most powerful theocratic empire in world history, or comes in behind ancient Egypt as second in such a ranking. Either way, Byzantium in its earlier years was a powerful theocracy but also was subject to powerful challenges of its theocracy, the strongest external challenges being the Muslims in the east, and the Venetians and the Vatican in the west. This together with a myriad of other observations may induce the question: Was Byzantine theology fundamentalistic? To my mind, the answer, especially for the earlier centuries of Byzantium, is, yes. Fundamentalism, albeit in highly refined drapery, was the price to pay for saving the Roman Empire from its existential inner religious crisis in the late third and the fourth centuries. In later years, through the humanistic upsurge, with Photios as an early figurehead, the fundamentalist charge decreased, and/or as a consequence of the decline of imperial power in general.

This is difficult to quantify. Overall, the later commentators of Byzantium, starting perhaps with the unfortunate John Italos, stand in testimony to a long-term decrease in fundamentalism, a turning-away from it, through a dispassionate attitude. Unlike fundamentalists, they were moved more by detached values of telos such as classical sophrosyne, which we might translate as “blissful contentment”, in harmony with the Philokalia which is a Byzantine spiritual exploration of that concept. While fundamentalists want to change outer realities, those who turn away from fundamentalism favour changing inner realities and building inner values. That may have been an aspect of the humanistic upsurge in the wake of Photios and others, but not subject to mass reception.

The ancient notion of sophrosyne, the key to classical Greek philosophy, was known in Byzantium.

Lindahl, Roy Elwin; *A Study of Sophrosyne in Non-Theological Byzantine Literature*; PhD thesis, Tulane University 1971

The difficulties of sophrosyne are not so much in its concept as in a purely secular mind approaching it. The secular mind approach is unsatisfactory and loses itself in complexities of non-comprehension of the child-like simplicity of sophrosyne, functionally the same as, Buddhist peace, a meditative, not an intellectual value. The west is at loss over this in an enhanced fundamentalism that Nietzsche began calling nihilism.

Rademaker, Adriaan; *Sophrosyne and the Rhetoric of Self-Restraint, Polysemy and Persuasive Use of an Ancient Greek Value Term*; Leiden, Boston 2005

The title of this chapter is slightly provocative, since, due to cultural shifts and long duration of time, the late ancient and early Byzantine genre of the philosophical commentary shifted in that it gained more of a life of its own. This is shown, for example, by Joseph Rhakendytes (Joseph the Philosopher, Rhacendytes), who, in his so-called *Encyclopedia* of learning, skipped the underlying text(s) and wrote an independent work in its own right. The genre of Humanism as known in the Renaissance was of such a nature, commenting on (real or alleged) “ancient” thoughts (nearly always meaning, in their Byzantine transmission and/or reception) but using the format of an independent publication no longer overtly in the “commentary” genre. One might paraphrase that as the humanist post-commentary genre of a higher level of originality than would be fit for a pure commentary which is dominated by the basic text.

There is still much groundwork to be done for such a chapter. This chapter, thus, is more in rags than other chapters in this book may be. Here are the publications that I intend to use for this chapter:

Gielen, Erika; *12 Ad maiorem Dei gloriam, Joseph Rhakendytès' synopsis of Byzantine learning*; in: König, Jason; Woolf, Greg (editors); *Encyclopaedism from Antiquity to the Renaissance*; New York 2013, pp. 259-276

Scholarship has identified six later Byzantine commentators that is described, including their names, in a paragraph of the Wikipedia article on “Commentaries on Aristotle” (2017-04-14):

“The line of the Aristotelian commentators was continued to the later ages of the Byzantine Empire. In the 12th century Anna Comnena organised a group of scholars which included the commentators Michael of Ephesus, and Eustratius of Nicaea who employed himself upon the dialectic and moral treatises, and whom she does not hesitate to elevate above the Stoics and Platonists for his talent in philosophical discussions. Nicephorus Blemmydes wrote logical and physical epitomes for the use of John III Doukas Vatatzes; George Pachymeres composed an epitome of the philosophy of Aristotle, and a compendium of his logic: Theodore Metochites, who was famous in his time for his eloquence and his learning, has left a paraphrase of the books of Aristotle on Physics, On the Soul, On the Heavens, etc. The same period saw the commentaries and paraphrases of Sophonias.” (underlining added SG)

I propose to include Rhakendytes (c.1260/1280-c.1330) in the group of later Byzantine commentators. Commentators were often paraphrasers. Rhakendytes is the encyclopedic paraphraser of an entire tradition, yet still not in the free sense of a later humanist of the Renaissance. The prehistory of this group may start with John Italos, the main pupil of Michael Psellos who was condemned for commentarial activity.

In the short history of the research, this is the first time that this group of thinkers is organized within one chapter. Particular attention will thus be paid to the question what the common grounds and the dynamics of the group are.

Expanding the scope, additional names to be considered, by search proximity in:

Lagerlund, Henrik (editor); *Encyclopedia of Medieval Philosophy, Philosophy between 500 and 1500*; Dordrecht etc. 2011

are: Arethas of Caesarea, George Scholarios, Michael Psellos, Leo Magentenios, Nikephoros Choumnos, Niketas Stethatos, Symeon Seth. This is reflected in the following timeline (including still other names by proximity, without claim to completeness):

born c.860	Arethas of Caesarea
c.1005-c.1090	Niketas Stethatos
1017/18-1078/96	Michael Psellos
11th century	Ioannis Italos (condemned: 1082)
c.1050/1060-c.1120	Eustratios of Nikaia
early/mid-12th century	Michael of Ephesos
c.1150-1160/66	Nicholas of Methone
in period 1150-1250	Leo Magentenios
1197-1272	Nikephoros Blemmydes
1242–c.1310	Georgios Pachymeres
1250/55-1327	Nikephoros Choumnos
c.1260/1280-c.1330	Joseph the Philosopher (Rhakendytes)

1270-1332	Theodoros Metochites
fl. c.1300	Sophonias
c.1295-1359/61	Nikephoros Gregoras
1319/1323-1397/1398	Nicholas Chamaetos Kabasilas (theologian, Aristotelian)
c.1400-c.1473	Georgios (Gennadios) Scholarios

These thinkers and their works form a ramp to Humanism. Their two early pillars were Patriarch Photios and Michael Psellos, who were already discussed in the two foregoing chapters. Photios cannot without distortion be included in this chapter directly since that would require categorizing him as a “commentator” or a “paraphraser”, neither of which he was; he built his intelligence diligently through a mix of chrestomathy, literary criticism, and lexicography, attaining a high battle-proven grade of literacy and elocution that set the standard for humanist performance for ages to come, living on in the collective memory of Byzantium in a myriad subtle forms as evidenced by his medial presence in language and citation practice, still the key lacuna of Photios research (see chapter 7).

The fundamentalist mindset is a neurotic mixture of fixed ideas, stereotypes (fixed ideas that have settled into the attitudinal), and a basic emotional tone of melancholy. Photios and the Ramp (for lack of a school name for the group) exemplify that it was possible for educated Byzantines (more than can be traced here) to counter such a negative and destructive mindset in their own human-mind interface. This was apparently launched as a lasting strand of historical influence by Photios.

The fixed idea is subconscious (subliminal) and is inaccessible to rational discussion for as long as it remains subconscious. The fixed idea is held in the subconscious by an anchor, namely, the anchor of the “pathogenic secret”. The pathogenic secret, and thus, also, the power of fixation of the fixed idea, are dissolved when they are brought back into consciousness realization.

The pathogenic secret is always the sacred of a religion. Religions are systems of fixed ideas. To understand this, one must realize that the mind is aware of far far more than our notion of the “conscious” suggests. The mind is aware, for example, of every lie. A parallel observation is that sleeping people do not stop being conscious of what goes on around them. They simply cannot recall it in their waking memory.

The pathogenic secret of a religion is its founding lie. Pertinent observations of this have been made. What later Byzantine thinkers were able to achieve to an unusually high degree is to unravel the many founding lies of their own religion, called Christianity. That is counterbalanced by their firm rooting, as an ethnic group, in spiritual contact, called mysticism. Photios and the Ramp were people on the move out of this neurotic co-dependency on fundamental and fundamentalistic lies of religion and the founding of a given religion. Such lies are always lies of power and control, including mental control by the invisible bondage of fixed ideas and stereotype (which are not the same as insanity).

Arethas of Caesarea (born c.860)

Wikipedia article (2017-04-14)

Matula, Jozef; article, in Lagerlund, *Encyclopedia of Medieval Philosophy*

Arethas is a major figure in Byzantine intellectual history. When the west received the great bequest from Byzantine of knowledge of antiquity, much of that was the direct result of Arethas’ work. Arethas belongs to the budding “first Byzantine Renaissance”, as it is known today. His lifetime in the ninth and tenth centuries falls into a period of cultural and, specifically, intellectual, transition. He organized a transcript of Plato’s complete works, adding marginal notes of his own. He authored scholia on Aristotle’s text. He valued philosophical learning and commented on ancient philosophical texts. He also encouraged others to follow his

example. He had a special interest in late Alexandrian Neoplatonism and in Porphyry's ontology. He was behind the revival of Aristotle. (Jozef Matula, with references.)

Niketas Stethatos (c.1005-c.1090)

Wikipedia article (2017-04-14)

See chapter 5 in my vol. 3 (St. Symeon the New Theologian and his disciple, Niketas Stethatos).

Michael Psellos (1017/18-1078/96)

Wikipedia article (2017-04-14)

Ierodiakonou, Katerina; article, in Lagerlund, *Encyclopedia of Medieval Philosophy*

I refer to chapter 8 below in this book.

Ioannis Italos (11th century, condemned: 1082)

Wikipedia article (2017-04-14)

Clucas, Lowell M.; *The Trial of John Italos and the Crisis of Intellectual Values in Byzantium in the Eleventh Century*; Munich 1981

Ierodiakonou, Katerina; article, in Lagerlund, *Encyclopedia of Medieval Philosophy*

-----; *John Italos on Universals*; in: Documenti e studi sulla tradizione filosofica medievale, volume 18, 2007, pp. 231-248

Kotzabassi, Sofia; *Byzantinische Kommentatoren der aristotelischen Topik. Johannes Italos und Leon Magentinos*; Thessaloniki 1999

Marenbon, John; article: Aristotelianism in the Greek, Latin, Syriac, Arabic, and Hebrew Traditions, in Lagerlund, *Encyclopedia of Medieval Philosophy*

Trizio, Michele; *Chapter 7, Eleventh- to twelfth-century Byzantium*; in: Stephen Gersh (editor); *Interpreting Proclus from Antiquity to the Renaissance*; Cambridge 2014, pp. 182-215

Paraphrasing two passages from John Marenbon:

Over centuries, the basic course of Aristotelian studies was rather narrow. The key text was Porphyry's *Isagoge*, supplemented by the *Categories*, *On Interpretation*, and by *Prior Analytics* 1.1–7 (Syriac schools), *Sophistical Refutations* 1–7, and extracts from *Meteorology*, and *On Generation and Corruption*. In logic, the ancient commentary tradition continued with Photios in the ninth century and Michael Psellos and John Italos in the eleventh century.

A constant feature of Byzantine civilization was the suspicion of Aristotelianism, under the general banner of "Hellenism," meaning sympathy for Greek pagan thought. Regardless, scholars were able to maintain a tradition of Aristotelian exegesis. This required caution and diplomacy on behalf of the scholar, however. Michael Psellos, an obvious target despite his prominence, slipped by when charges of heresy were vented. His student, John Italos, however, got caught in the pernicious Byzantine thought trap. A series of trials led to his condemnation; and his books were burned. "The charges against him were related to his use of Aristotelian logic in theology, and he was said, probably unjustly, not merely to have enquired into the doctrines of the ancients but to have accepted them as truths." (Marenbon) This also had to do with shifting political winds in Byzantium. We still have, for example, the text of Italos' commentary on Aristotle's *Topike* (Kotzabassi).

Eustratios of Nikaia (c.1050/1060-c.1120)

Wikipedia article (2017-04-14)

Ierodiakonou, Katerina; *Metaphysics in the Byzantine Tradition: Eustratios of Nicaea on Universals*; in: Quaestio, volume 5, 2005, 67-82

-----; article, in Lagerlund, *Encyclopedia of Medieval Philosophy*

Marenbon, John; article: Aristotelianism in the Greek, Latin, Syriac, Arabic, and Hebrew Traditions, in Lagerlund, *Encyclopedia of Medieval Philosophy*

Trizio, Michele; *Chapter 7, Eleventh- to twelfth-century Byzantium*; in: Stephen Gersh (editor); *Interpreting Proclus from Antiquity to the Renaissance*; Cambridge 2014, pp. 182-215

Barber, Charles; Jenkins, David (editors); *Medieval Greek Commentaries on the Nicomachean Ethics*; Leiden, Boston 2009

Paraphrasing a passage from John Marenbon:

In the twelfth century, Eustratios and Michael of Ephesus expanded the range of Aristotelian commentary. Michael wrote commentaries on parts of the Ethics and Metaphysics, on various of Aristotle's books on natural philosophy and on the Politics; Eustratios wrote on parts of the Posterior Analytics and of the Ethics. All these commentaries reuse a great deal of old material – just as had been done in the ancient schools. Indeed, one form of Byzantine commentary consists simply of marginalia collected from a variety of sources, with an introduction added. But twelfth-century writers like Eustratios and Michael drew this type of material to make an integral running commentary on the text. The tendency of the Byzantine commentators to base themselves on earlier writers, and ultimately the ancient tradition, makes it a difficult matter to work out the respects in which they contributed their own thoughts.

From Wikipedia:

Eustratius was a pupil of John Italus, although he had deliberately dissociated himself from John's supposed heretical views when John was condemned around 1082. A few years after the trial of Italus, he wrote a dialogue and treatise on the use of icons directed against Leo, the bishop of Chalcedon, who had accused the emperor Alexius Comnenus of sacrilege and iconoclasm in the way in which he had stripped the churches of gold to fund his wars. For this he gained the emperor Alexios I's friendship, and this probably helped him to become Metropolitan bishop of Nicaea. Eustratius was said by Anna Comnena to have been wise both in mundane and in religious matters and especially expert in argument. Nevertheless he found himself accused of heresy in 1117 and a charge was placed before the Synod of Constantinople which narrowly succeeded despite a defence by Patriarch John IX of Constantinople. As a result of the condemnation Eustratius was formally suspended for life.

The work of Eustratios of Nicaea as far as we have evidence, included discussion of universals (Katerina Ierodiakonou 2005). Eustratios was particularly important for the rediscovery of Aristotle in the west (Katerina Ierodiakonou, Encyclopedia article).

Michael of Ephesos (early/mid-12th century)

Wikipedia article (2017-04-14)

Ierodiakonou, Katerina; article, in Lagerlund, *Encyclopedia of Medieval Philosophy*

Arabatzis, George; *Michael of Ephesus and the philosophy of living things (In De partibus animalium 22.25 – 23.9)*; in: Börje Bidèn; Katerina Ierodiakonou (editors); *The Many Faces of Byzantine Philosophy*; The Norwegian Institute at Athens 2012, pp. 51-78

Barber, Charles; Jenkins, David (editors); *Medieval Greek Commentaries on the Nicomachean Ethics*; Leiden, Boston 2009

Like Eustratios of Nikaea, Michael of Ephesus apparently belonged to the twelfth century intellectual circle of Anna Komnene and took part in her project to create commentaries on Aristotle. His writings on Aristotle's ethics, logic, metaphysics, and biology furthered the revival of Aristotelian studies in Byzantium, and helped in the transmission and rediscovery of Aristotelian thought in the Latin west. (after Katerina Ierodiakonou)

Nicholas of Methone (c.1150-1160/66)

Matula, Jozef, article, in: Lagerlund, *Encyclopedia of Medieval Philosophy*
Trizio, Michele; *Chapter 7, Eleventh- to twelfth-century Byzantium*; in: Stephen Gersh (editor); *Interpreting Proclus from Antiquity to the Renaissance*; Cambridge 2014, pp. 182-215

Paraphrasing a passage from Jozef Matula:

Nicholas of Methone, a leading intellectual in twelfth century Byzantium, refuted in a detailed way Proclus' *Elements of Theology*. Concerned by the popularity of Proclus, Nicholas defended Christian Orthodoxy. He focused on Proclus' Neoplatonic categories and their influence on Christian doctrines. He criticized heretical Christian teachings as being confused by pagan learning. That was a reaction to eleventh century Christian Hellenism. Nicholas commented on Proclus' use of the term, participation, and other philosophical terms. He was a critic of inconsistencies in Proclus.

Leo Magentenios (in period 1150-1250)

Bidén, Börje; article, in Lagerlund, *Encyclopedia of Medieval Philosophy*
Kotzabassi, Sofia; *Byzantinische Kommentatoren der aristotelischen Topik. Johannes Italos und Leon Magentinos*; Thessaloniki 1999

Leo(n) Magentenios was a Byzantine commentator on Porphyry's *Isagoge* and Aristotle's *Organon*. (Börje Bidén)

Nikephoros Blemmydes (1197-1272)

Wikipedia article (2017-04-14)

Triantari, Sotiria; *Stoicism and Byzantine Philosophy, Proairesis in Epictetus and Nicephorus Blemmydes*; in: *Bochumer Philosophisches Jahrbuch für Antike und Mittelalter*, volume 17, 2014, pp. 85-98

Zografidis, George; article, in Lagerlund, *Encyclopedia of Medieval Philosophy*

Blemmydes is an important Byzantine literatus. In philosophy, he is noted for his reception of the ancient stoic, Epiktetos, and analysis of Epiktetos' ethical concept of *proairesis* (Triantari). There is also an *Epitome logica* of Nicephorus Blemmydes, PG 142, coll. 675–1004, so far the only modern edition.

Georgios Pachymeres (1242–c.1310)

Wikipedia article (2017-04-14)

Zografidis, George; article, in Lagerlund, *Encyclopedia of Medieval Philosophy*

Boiadjiev, Tzotcho; *Georgios Pachymeres between Plato and Dionysius: the One and the Being*; in: Martin Pickavé (editor); *Die Logik des Transzendentalen, Festschrift für Jan A. Aertsen zum 65. Geburtstag*, Berlin, New York 2003, pp. 501-510

Pachymeres was a popular Byzantine historian. Without being an original thinker, he also had an interest, so far rarely noted, in philosophy. The article of Boiadjiev deals with two paraphrases, i.e. essentially, writing exercises. What is demonstrated is a life straying away at least partly to the fringes of imperial hypnotic mind control and possibly beyond.

Nikephoros Choumnos (1250/55-1327)

Wikipedia article (2017-04-14)

Demetracopoulos, John A.; article, in Lagerlund, *Encyclopedia of Medieval Philosophy*

-----; article: Metaphysics, Byzantine, in *supra*

Benakis, Linos G.; *Nikephoros Choumnos (1250-1327) über die Seele gegen Plotin*; in: Linos G. Benakis (editor); *Néoplatonisme et philosophie médiévale: Actes du Colloque international de Corfou, 6-8 octobre 1995 organisé par la Société Internationale pour l'Etude de la Philosophie Médiévale*; Turnhout 1997, pp. 319-326

Philosophically, Choumnos played a part in the development of Byzantine metaphysics.

Paraphrasing a passage from John Demetracopoulos (Metaphysics, Byzantine):

Nikephoros Choumnos launched a fierce attack on universals in the late thirteenth century. Choumnos rejected not only Plato's "ideas" but also Aristotle's immanent "forms" (*On Matter and Forms*, 242–316). Choumnos wished to exalt God's power as the "absolutely sufficient cause of the world's existence and form". Choumnos in such an effort follows Plotinus in *Ennead* II, 2, 1–2 closely.

Concerning the soul, he stood against Plotinus, however (Linos G. Benakis).

Quote from John Demetracopoulos (Metaphysics, Byzantine):

Yet, cases like that of Photios, Choumnos, and Kabisilas were exceptions; during the second Byzantine revival of Platonism (second half of thirteenth century to middle fifteenth century), Ammonius' doctrine of "universals" as existing "before the many," "in the many," and "after the many" was typical, even though thinkers like Nikephoros Blemmydes, George Pachymeres (fourteenth century), Theodore Metochites (thirteenth to fourteenth centuries), Nikephoros Gregoras, Barlaam of Calabria, and Gregory Palamas (fourteenth century) added each of their own epistemological nuances.

Joseph the Philosopher (Rhakendytes, c.1260/1280-c.1330)

Gielen, Erika; *12 Ad maiorem Dei gloriam, Joseph Rhakendytès' synopsis of Byzantine learning*; in: König, Jason; Woolf, Greg (editors); *Encyclopaedism from Antiquity to the Renaissance*; New York 2013, pp. 259-276

The age was one of decline of the empire, but also of imperial patronage, helping the revival of ancient learning. Joseph the Philosopher stood in this Hellenic revival with his monumental work, *Synopsis variarum disciplinarum*, today often called his "Encyclopedia", functionally, a synopsis of Byzantine learning. In her learned research article, Gielen differentiates Rhakendytes' position within Byzantine encyclopedism which is still often seen negatively.

Theodoros Metochites (1270-1332)

Wikipedia article (2017-04-14)

Bidèn, Börje; article, in Lagerlund, *Encyclopedia of Medieval Philosophy*

Bazzani, Marina; *Theodore Metochites, A Byzantine Humanist*; in: Byzantion, volume 76, 2006, pp. 32-52

Beck, H.G.; *Theodoros Metochites, Die Krise des byzantinischen Weltbildes im 14. Jahrhundert*; Munich 1952

Fryde, Edmund Boleslav; *Theodore Metochites*; in: Fryde, E.B.; *The Early Palaeologan Renaissance (1261-c.1360)*; Leiden 2000, pp. 322-336

Hunger, Herbert; *Theodoros Metochites als Vorläufer des Humanismus in Byzanz*; in: Byzantinische Zeitschrift, volume 45, issue 1, 1952, pp. 4-19

Xanthopoulos, Theodoros; *Theodoros Metochites und die spätbyzantinische Gelehrtenkultur*; in: Albrecht Berger et al. (editors); *Koinotaton Doron, Das späte Byzanz zwischen Machtlosigkeit und kultureller Blüte (1204-1461)*; Berlin, Boston 2016, pp. 161-184

Metochites, a statesman and for several years the Grand Logothete of the empire, was also a polymath. He left three large writings: the *Stoicheiosis astronomike* (1316/1317); the *Paraphrases of Aristotle's Writings on Natural Philosophy* (c. 1320); and a collection of "philosophical and historical" essays, the *Semeioseis gnomikai* (c. 1326). As a Renaissance person, his writings document his self-education and personal transformative undertaking with the help of ancient knowledge, and his interest in astronomy. That may be good for a short paragraph, but it marks a significant long-term change in the world view that the Byzantines held.

Sophonias (fl. c.1300)

Searby, Denis; article, in Lagerlund, *Encyclopedia of Medieval Philosophy*

Blumenthal, Henry J.; *Sophonias' commentary on Aristotle's De anima*; in: Linos G. Benakis (editor); *Néoplatonisme et philosophie médiévale: Actes du Colloque international de Corfou, 6-8 octobre 1995 organisé par la Société Internationale pour l'Etude de la Philosophie Médiévale*; Turnhout 1997, pp. 307-317

Manolova, Divna; *Sophonias the Philosopher. A Preface of an Aristotelian Commentary: Structure, Intention, and Audience*; MA Thesis in Medieval Studies, Budapest May 2008

Sophonias paraphrased Aristotelian works without originality.

Nikephoros Gregoras (c.1295-1359/61)

Wikipedia article (2017-04-14)

Demetracopoulos, John A.; article, in Lagerlund, *Encyclopedia of Medieval Philosophy*

Bidè, Börje; *The Criticism of Aristotle in Nikephoros Gregoras' Florentius*; in: Denis M. Serby (editor); *Dorondopoikilon: studies in honour of Jan Olof Rosenqvist*; Uppsala 2012, pp. 107-122

Fryde, Edmund Boleslav; *Nikephoros Gregoras*; in: Fryde, E.B.; *The Early Palaeologan Renaissance (1261-c.1360)*; Leiden 2000, pp. 357-373

Manolova, Divna; *Discourses of Science and Philosophy in the Letters of Nikephoros Gregoras*; PhD thesis, DOI: 10.14754/CEU.2014.01

Mariev, Sergei; *Παιδεία und ἀστειότης im Dialog 'Phlorentios' des Nikephoros Gregoras*; in: Frühmittelalterliche Studien, volume 45, issue 1, 2011, pp. 245-258

-----; *Plotinus in the Phlorentius of Nikephoros Gregoras*; in: Albrecht Berger et al. (editors); Koinotaton Doron, Das späte Byzanz zwischen Machtlosigkeit und kultureller Blüte (1204-1461); Berlin, Boston 2016, pp. 101-107

Nikephoros Gregoras is one of the main witnesses to the Hesychast Controversy.

After John A. Demetracopoulos:

Nikephoros Gregoras was a conservative anti-Latin theologian. He polemicized against Gregory Palamas. His background was polymathic learning, theology, philosophy, astronomy, and historian. He was mentored by Theodore Metochites.

Philosophically, Gregoras was a Platonist and Skeptic. This combination was similar to that of Philo of Alexandria. He held God to the “One” that transcends reality. It is contained in immaterial archetypes that manifest in Creation. Aristotle disgusted him, since, according to Metochites, Aristotle had pretentious knowledge.

Nicholas Chamaetos Kabasilas (theologian, Aristotelian, 1319/1323-1397/1398)

Kapriev, Georgi; article, in Lagerlund, *Encyclopedia of Medieval Philosophy*

Paraphrase and quote from a passage from Georgi Kapriev:

Nicholas Kabasilas is acknowledged as one of the greatest theologians of the Middle Ages. He was a Palamite. He worked for a unification of the eastern and western Churches. “Kabasilas owes his place in the Christian theology mainly to his sacramental teaching. The life of men is nothing else but life in Christ, which is mainly achieved by free sacramental participation.”

Kabasilas is listed here as an Aristotelian, since he read Aristotle and, in his Hesychast theology, gave testimony, or comment, to that.

Georgios (Gennadios) Scholarios (c.1400-c.1473)

Wikipedia article (2017-04-14)

Demetracopoulos, John A.; article, in Lagerlund, *Encyclopedia of Medieval Philosophy*

Penel, Victor Henri Antoine; *The Change in Position of George Scholarios from Pro-Union of the Western and Eastern Churches to Anti-Union*; PhD thesis, Anglia Ruskin University 2014

George (Gennadios) Scholarios was a Byzantine Aristotelian and Thomist and lay in conflict with the Platonist George Gemistos Plethon. He became the first Patriarch of Constantinople after the Turkish capture of the city (1454–1456).

10 Theodore Sabo on the Proto-Hesychasts

Customized Aristotle Module - My Excerpts -

This module continues the discussion from the end of the introduction above.

Aristotle did not consider logics and dialectics to be part of philosophy. He considered them to be tools for thinking, not contents to be thought about. In the Middle Ages, it became customary, under the title of the *Organon*, to include Aristotle's logics in philosophy. It is clear that Aristotle must have done quite a lot of thinking about logics and dialectics. He must have considered such thinking as a different type of thinking than philosophical thinking. That is one of the many open questions that one can pose to Aristotle.

I would like to respond to that with excerpts from my vol. 2 concerning Aristotle:

excerpt from my vol. 2, p. 105:

In Aristotelian logics, the observation of (not exactly just “dual”) layers of thinking, and hence, of awareness (which remains when active thinking rests) is present from the beginning. The English technical term of philosophy: “universal” translates the technical term “*katholou*” in Aristotle. Its opposite is “*to kath’ hekaston*”. *Katholou* stands for “on the whole” (note the intrinsic meaning of the expression “Catholic” church). Its opposite designates, “singular” (or, “particular”).

In the major premise of Aristotelian logics, the terms used are *katholou*. In the minor premise, the terms used are *kath’ hekaston*. That demonstrates that the underlying, deeply hidden psychological mechanism of logics, as far as it resembles the Aristotelian model, is a linkage between lower energy bodies (awareness levels) and higher (template-level) energy bodies (and their template awareness levels). That is the mechanics of why logic triggers and enhances the activity of *understanding*, which is the symbolic vision of the highest energy body (Light-Body). (Vice versa, understanding, in the over-individuated fragmented mind, dies in the subnormal awareness of persecutorial dark beings.)

Energetically, logics is thus a phenomenon of Kundalini awakening. It is *not*, at least not in the sense of Aristotle, a pushing around of meaningless “tokens”, contrary to what the nonsense of modern symbolic logics would purport. (Misnamed “symbolic logic” is merely *token logic* of a failing paper money civilization.) Logic is the start of awareness of more than one level of awareness in a technical sense. A more layman's type realization of multi-level awareness is duality in its various forms (mind-body dualism, subject-object dualism, etc.) The intricate Indian traditions of Advaita (literally: “non-two”) consciousness models are still limited to that, since that what they aim for is not merely “non-two” but is, additionally, also “non-three”, “non-four”, etc. (lawyer's remark.)

(end of excerpt from my vol. 2, p. 105)

excerpt from my vol. 2, p. 108 sq.:

The ancients, including Aristotle, saw the heart, not the brain, as the true seat of the mind in man. They apparently had more of the ninefold awareness than they have let their afterworld know in their surviving writings; it may not have been a point of particular reflection for them. As mentioned in an earlier notation in this book, the metaphor of a ladder (ascension) has its limits; we are talking about an expansion. In many ways, it is an expansion inwards to the innermost – to the heart! One of the realizations that this discussion wishes to bring about is that the mind, individual, collective and universal, is much more than merely an intellect; and that the intellect is merely a minute part of the mind. The infinities of reality are dealt with by the heart. This means, not the physical organ, but the heart chakra, Anahata.

Faith, a term of Christianity, and of Islam, makes use predominantly of the heart (Anahata). Faith goes straight to the innermost. This corresponds with the Light-Body (9th level). The Light-Body is a unified chakra of the ONE growing from the heart. It contains a sacred inner space that is a mirror reflection of the universe as the physical senses depict it; but the inner universe is far richer than the universe that the physical senses perceive. This culture of the heart and the inner universe was established by the time of early Byzantium. It is the main legacy that was then handed further to Islam.

The high development of the culture of the heart in Byzantium came with the flowering of Hesychasm. Vasilios Tatakis (*The Christian Philosophy in the Patristic and Byzantine Tradition*, p. 154 f.) points out that the Hesychasts of M. Athos used bodily posture work, similar to a yoga asana, to arrive at ecstatic love, and thereby, mystical union with God. They concentrated their attention on the position of the heart. The union with God occurs when the Spirit can attract the (human) mind into the depths of the heart. The Spirit thereby seizes the (human) mind and stops the mind's customary, habitual movement to external objects. Tatakis connotes (p. 155):

“Only the operation of the heart leads to pure truth, because it is a pure and simple operation, without any form, a gift of divine grace. (...) The territory that was opened by the evangelical commandment of love is now all the more stretched and tends to embrace the whole life of man.”

In the terms of Immanuel Kant, the only thing that is purely good is the good will. The aforescribed mechanism is the exertion of the good will, creating the purely good as an abstract universal intention, or Imperative. That is Light-Body activation.

In my opinion, that is a timeless teaching of man's nine bodies. The Fifteen Emerald Tablets of Thoth mention prominently the “formless” (§§ 120, 129, 192, 194, 263, 285, 291, 295, 296, 299, 305, 307, 309, 315, 325; by logical implication, this is also a “boundless”, Greek “apeiron”). All that gives us a critically important hint to continue this extremely difficult Commentary: The approach of a person to the formless in her or his inner universe is always an approach to the “formless”, in the analysis of Kant, an extremely abstract exertion of the individual free will (with the free-will center located mostly in the eighth body). Hesychasm describes the relevant free-will exertion as a (deified) “love”, but at the same time also as mystical union with God. (end of excerpt from my vol. 2, p. 108 sq.)

As for Aristotle's position on spiritual connectivity of man, I refer to a passage from my e-book:

SG; *Formal Consistency and Spirituality, Overcoming Psychosis*; written: 2016-08-22 to 2016-09-10

excerpt from this *Formal Consistency* e-book, p. 19:

A ninth plane is also described by Dr. Norma J. Milanovich, in: *The Light Shall Set You Free*; Albuquerque 1996. Wherever it is treated, it reaches beyond the individual and is transpersonal in the most authentic sense (including in my proposed parapsychical reading of C.G. Jung's “collective unconscious”). In Brennan, significantly, there is no ninth body. That is correct since for her healing purposes she describes very precisely the seven levels of the human aura. The ninth body (eighth energy body) is not an eighth level of the human aura, but is a body of connectivity with the divine Unmoved Moving (Fohat, etc.) Steiner has it internally stratified (he uses the plural, “hierarchies”). The notion of nine bodies of man (instead of eight, or six, or three) is no total novelty today any longer, as it was once known in the ancient Egyptian priesthood.

In ancient Egypt, that was the level of the Akhu, and the Akhu's realization of the Higher Self of the ninth level (see in my vol. 2, with my Desmarquet/Thiaoouba collation.) In Plato, we have for this the “ideas”/”forms”. At the end of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* (which is as far as we know one of the few texts that are actually his own writing), where the “bios theoretikos” visionarily participates in the thinking of the Divine (of the Unmoved Mover, in other words, akroamatically), that is exactly that very same high level that

is addressed. (Again, that text does not disclose particulars of the thought language of that archetypal [Jung] level, but in Aristotle's case - the pupil of Plato -, we may impute that the akroamatic understanding of the Organon [medieval name] fits in that gap. That is clearly also the substance of what Philo of Alexandria then popularized in the guise of his Logos philosophy, probably still a bit conservatively.)

(end of excerpt from *Formal Consistency*, p. 19)

- Standard Scholarship -

The following presents pertinent notes and analyses of standard scholarship.

- Anagnostopoulos, Andreas; *Change in Aristotle's Physics 3*, in: Brad Inwood (editor); Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy, volume XXXIX, winter 2010, pp. 33-79
- Bodnar, Istvan M.; *Movers and Elemental Motions in Aristotle*; in: C.C.W. Taylor (editor); Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy, volume XV, 1997, pp. 81-117
- Bowin, John; *Aristotelian Infinity*; in: David Sedley (editor); Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy, volume XXXII, summer 2007, pp. 233-250
- Bradshaw, David; *Aristotle East and West, Metaphysics and the Division of Christendom*; New York 2004
- Buchanan, Emerson; *Aristotle's Theory of Being*; University (Miss.), Cambridge (Mass) 1962
- Charles, David; *Aristotle on Essence and Meaning*; New York 2000
- Fonfara, Dirk; *Die Ousia-Lehren des Aristoteles* (German: Aristotle's Theories of ousia); Berlin, Boston 2003
- Furth, Montgomery; *Substance, form, and psyche, An Aristotelean metaphysics*; Cambridge etc. 1988
- Horn, Christoph (editor); *Aristotle's Metaphysics Lambda – New Essays, Proceedings of the 13th Conference of the Karl and Gertrud Abel-Foundation Bonn, November, 28th -December 1st, 2010*; Boston, Berlin 2016
- Kosman, Aryeh; *Virtues of Thought, Essays on Plato and Aristotle*; Cambridge (Mass.), London 2014
- Lacoste, Jean-Yves; *From "energeia" to divine "energies"* (review of the book by David Bradshaw, Aristotle East and West); in: International Journal of the Classical Tradition / Winter 2007, pp. 437-442
- Sirkel, Riin; *The Problem of Universals (Katholou) in Aristotle*; PhD thesis, The University of Western Ontario 2010
- Tierney, Richard; *Aristotle's Scientific Demonstrations as Expositions of Essence*; in: David Sedley (editor); Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy, volume XX, summer 2009, pp. 149-170
- Yu, Jiyuan; *Two Conceptions of Hylomorphism in Metaphysics Zeta, Eta, and Theta*; in: C.C.W. Taylor (editor); Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy, volume XV, 1997, pp. 119-145

The key to the problem is the classical Greek concept of "ousia" as used by Aristotle. Its traditional translation, practiced over many centuries, as "substance" is a gross aberrance from all proprieties of translation; it is not defensible (Aryeh Kosman, pp. 267-279). Nobody knew what it means.

Ousia is a pre-ancient concept attached to a classical Greek word. It is not the same as the "aether". Ousia is a creator idea/form (information set) in the aether. It is not in the quantum realm, is not vibrational, and is not countable (is transfinite after Georg Cantor). The ousia is automatically manifested by the Four Forces - let us call them here, shifting synonyms: the Four Energies - in the vibrational, temporal realms of Creation. The aether and its many ousia themselves are unmoved. God/Prime Source/Source Existence Plane is the aether, or Divine Mind. It/she/he can be experienced directly by mystical contact. That is different than having "knowledge" of it in the sense of a subject-object dichotomy of epistemology. The contact experience is inextricably unitary. With that said, an appropriate translation can be, "essence". The specialized Latin term "quidditas" (English words: whatness, quiddity) also fits well.

St. Gregory of Sinai says in the Philokalia:

*So plunging the mind into the light that it becomes light,
the intellect, guided by the Spirit, inscribes the inner meaning of things
in the pure hearts of those who listen.*

The Philokalia reflects the Byzantine culture of mystical contact. It preserves and explains mankind's most ancient participatory ways of dealing with the ousia that form our reality. Chapter 12 has an Appendix on the Philokalia. The Philokalia is the genuine philosophy that Byzantium blended from the ingredients that it received.

There is a keen distinction concerning such a line of thought:

Bordt, Michael, S.J.; *Why Aristotle's God is Not the Unmoved Mover*; in: Brad Inwood (editor); Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy; volume 40, 2011, pp. 91-109

I agree with much that Michael Bordt says. In the writeup that is called *Metaphysics*, not an original writing of Aristotle but faithfully transcribing his teachings, the best reading is "Unmoved Moving", in the neuter gender. Also, there is not just one of the, but there are several, something like fifty-five. That is basically Plato's last idea about these things as set forth in Plato's one post-Socratic dialogue, the *Nomoi* (Laws). The "Unmoved Moving" is a part of the system of energies. Typologically, it is the same as the "Supreme Unchanging" in Tibetan Kalachakra Tantra. The classical Athenian version of this, and the medieval Tibetan version of this, are obviously more closely related than any mere coincidence would have. That suggests that both versions of the Unmoved Mover on this planet have a joint stemma and come from a common origin that is very old (since no classical Athenian to medieval Tibetan transmission is known, and secondary differences speak against a one-to-one reception in Tibet from classical Athens).

Aristotle's God in *Nikomachean Ethics* book ten is a thinker, not a mover, as Bordt aptly points out. That fits what I said about the aether as God, and the ideas/forms in the aether as ousia. The aether cannot be "proven" with the inept means of a science that negates logics. Take away the pseudo-scientific negation of logics, and the aether becomes the most certain fact of all, that what has the highest degree of evidence. That is a psychological Wechselbild and a Shibboleth for spiritual blindness.

A different opinion, also well argued, is a learned, even pointed, reply to the position of Michael Bordt by:

Herzberg, Stephan; *God as Pure Thinking. An Interpretation of Metaphysics A 7, 072b14–26*, in: Horn, Christoph (editor); *Aristotle's Metaphysics Lambda – New Essays*, Proceedings of the 13th Conference of the Karl and Gertrud Abel-Foundation Bonn, November, 28th -December 1st, 2010; Boston, Berlin 2016, pp. 157-180

Herzberg's interpretation of a passage in book lambda of Aristotle's *Metaphysics* accurately dismantles the dichotomy that Bordt builds up. However, both readings remain possible. Herzberg's mentally visual aspect a/k/a "theory" rests on the identification of ideas (in the Platonic sense, mostly, as Plato taught Aristotle) with the force that moves through desire, since, in the highest ethical teaching of Aristotle's *Nikomachean Ethics*, the divine desire, as can manifest in man, is for the mental vision of the heaven of ideas (see at the end of chapter 11, Appendix on the Philokalia). I cannot, here, into more details about this and many other facets of Horn's edited volume. – It remains clear that the Roman Catholic reading is in accordance with Bordt since such reading (atheistically) disagrees on the issue of the essence (ousia, not English "substance"), which has no basis in Aristotle (who was not an atheist).

The Findings of Theodore Sabo in His Thesis

Sabo, Theodore; *The Proto-Hesychasts: Origins of mysticism in the Eastern Church*; PhD thesis, North-West University, in cooperation with Greenwich School of Theology UK, May 2012, #21768404

The PhD thesis of Theodore Sabo can be found online as a pdf. It digests a voluminous tradition and for best information can be read in its entirety. There is no need to digest it here any further.

Byzantine Commentaries on Aristotle's Nikomachean Ethics

This relies on the following book for developing my own comments:

Barber, Charles; Jenkins, David (editors); *Medieval Greek Commentaries on the Nicomachean Ethics*; Leiden, Boston 2009

For the practical bottom line, see the Appendix at the end of chapter 11. Additionally read Aristotle.

11 St. Gregory Palamas, *The Hesychast Controversy*

In the west, this is de facto a heavily censored chapter of church history. The Hesychast Controversy is one of the most enduring parts of Byzantine history.

Nearing its end, the Byzantine wisdom development broke out in two major mind-shattering controversies. The first of these was the Hesychast Controversy in the fourteenth century, with St. Gregory Palamas giving Byzantine metaphysics-based Orthodox theology its lasting Palamite grounding of strong mystical bent that it basically retains to this day with ancient and amended arguments – arguments that functionally negate theology and functionally advocate humanism (which is already the subject of the next, and last, chapter below, investigating the second controversy).

Bradshaw, David; *St. Gregory Palamas as the Response of Orthodox Mystical Theology to (Neo-)Platonist and Aristotelian Metaphysics*; in: Constantinos Athanasopoulos; Christoph Schneider (editors); *Divine Essence and Divine Energies, Ecumenical Reflections on the Presence of God in Eastern Orthodoxy*; Cambridge 2013, pp. 50-67

Demetracopoulos, John A.; *Palamas Transformed. Palamite Interpretations of the Distinction between God's 'Essence' and 'Energies' in Late Byzantium*; in: Martin Hinterberger; Chris Schabel (editors); *Greeks, Latins, and Intellectual History 1204-1500*; Leuven etc. 2011, pp. 263-372

Факрасис Г.; *Диспут свт. Григория Паламы с Григорой философом. Философские и богословские аспекты паламитских споров* (Russian: Dispute of St. Gregory Palamas with Gregory the Philosopher, Philosophical and Theological Aspects of the Palamite Disputes); Athos 2009

Meyendorff, John; *A Study of Gregory Palamas*; Crestwood 1998

Plested, Marcus; *Gregory Palamas*; in: Parry, Ken; /, pp. 293-306

Here is an English abstract of a modern Russian review of the philosophical core issues (English slightly emended by me in two minor points):

Fernandez, Edrisi; *Russian Neoplatonism and the Doctrine of St. Gregory Palamas on the Divine Energies*; in: *Verbum* 17, 2015, pp. 186-202, English abstract on p. 186

In the light of an evaluation of hesychast beliefs and teachings from the Russian neoplatonist tradition (such as Pavel Alexandrovich Florensky and Aleksey Fedorovich Losev) we review here some important aspects of Gregory Palamas' thought, especially of his contribution to the essence-energy problem, inherited from some Middle Platonic and Neoplatonic philosophers, as well as from Christian Patristic theologians. Palamas believed that the Aristotelian dyad nature-energy was insufficient to express the being of God in an adequate way because God's energy or act is not simply "caused" by the Divine essence but is also "a personal act". In his essence God is unknowable but access to the divine life is guaranteed through participation in energy or energies: revelation consists of energies' manifestation and deification means sharing God's energies. This was of importance to drift away from the late Scholastic rationalism and Aristotelianism that placed God at a great distance from his creation. The essence-energy problem in its presentation in the debates about the Divine Energies became especially relevant for the Russian

non-Marxist thought, within which Vladimir Sergeyevich Solovyov acted as an important intermediary between Palamas and the Russian Neoplatonists of XX century.

Keywords: Essence-energy problem, Florensky, hesychasm, Losev, Palamas, Russian Neoplatonism, Solovyov, deification (theosis)

The main backdrop of Byzantium, different from that in the west, enabled the career of Gregory Palamas:

Benakis, Linos; *Philosophy and Theology in Byzantium*; in: European Journal of Science and Theology, volume 1, issue 3, September 2005, pp. 1-3, quote from p. 1 sq.:

The view that philosophy is *ancilla theologiae* (servant of theology), which the Greek Church fathers derived from Philo and the Alexandrian school of theology (Clemens, Origenes, Didymus), does not represent the dominant position of Byzantium, as is the case in the Latin West. Philosophy, and Logic in particular, was never subsumed under theology neither as background nor as a basic instrument. By the same token, theology in / Byzantium did not become a systematic method for the dialectical elaboration of Christian truths, that is, a science. Byzantine theologians accepted and used only apodictical syllogisms and never dialectical ones, witness of the persistent struggle between the few representatives of Latin scholasticism (mainly translators of the works of Thomas de Aquino into Greek) and the majority of the Byzantine theologians who remained faithful to the Orthodox tradition.

After the well-known Hesychasmus-controversy, which led to the victory of the movement led by Gregor Palamas, the Orthodox theology in Byzantium remained in principle a matter of monastic spirituality, which was of decisive importance after the Byzantine Empire and other peoples on the Balkan were subjected to Islamic Rule in the following centuries (1453-1820). The Greek nation and the Slavic countries managed to save their orthodox religion and their national identity on the basis of the dominant spirituality of their faith and not on the basis of a possible 'scientific' theology of their church.

For additional introduction, I would like to share some thoughts from reading Father John Meyendorff on the teachings of Gregory Palamas. (For the person of Gregory Palamas, see Meyendorff's book, and below in context of the Controversy.) Meyendorff broke the ground for western research, which unfortunately remains largely a lacuna, of this penetrating Byzantine thinker, Byzantium's greatest Saint. That shows that the disconnect of the west with Byzantine philosophy is not veritably due to purported superficiality and lacking creativity of the Byzantines, but due to a fundamental cultural clash of the rotten west vis-à-vis a spiritual culture.

Palamas was not a systematic writer in the sense of a modern-age philosophy professor. His writings had a polemical purpose in a spiritual warfare. Meyendorff makes sure not to superimpose a "system" onto Palamas, and to present Palamas' teachings in a logical order in which St. Grigory Palamas was aware of the teaching he was giving. (And Meyendorff, it must be said, joins the discussion in both an analytical and polemical mode.)

The doctrine of St. Gregory Palamas about the difference between the essence and energies of God is the most famous part of his writings, and yet it is not always correctly understood. This distinction is recurrent and is found in most published works of Palamas.

References to the teachings of St. Maximos the Confessor are extremely numerous in all the works of St. Gregory. Problems of consistency of theology abound. Meyendorff says as much as: St. Maximos developed the teaching of the Cappadocians, only in the direction of a greater abstraction of the essence, and the hypostasis turned into a concrete reality of any experience and any theology. Theological personalism is the

main feature of the tradition to which St. Gregory Palamas subscribes, the key to understanding his teaching about the divine energies. This illustrates that the discussions during the Controversy were not directly about Hesychasm (Jesus Prayer) and its description. The controversial discussions were held in genuine theological gibberish as the lingo of a power compromise (as outlined early-on in this book). It was here that Palamas prevailed. There are glimmerings of truth, however. For Palamas, divine action remains “simple”, for God is the only Actor in all energies.

The winning argument of Palamas plays on the assumption that the divine essence can manifest itself through its energies without manifesting its essence. That saves the face for Trinitarian arguments, which are energetic, and their implicit lie about revealing the essence nonetheless. Therein lies a denial of hesychasm and mystical contact while, at the same time, preserving its integrity. Palamas configures the Trinitarian lie of theology in such a way that he can turn it against Barlaam of Calabria and the anti-Hesychast forces. If they argue against the Trinity, and against revelation by denying direct contact in any form, then they are heretics. That strategy sprang the trap and, in the end, let Palamas and the cause of Hesychasm win. The key was not so much a genuine theology as a legal procedural device of argument, in which ingenuity can be found. That analysis of a winning strategy presupposes that Palamas fully saw through the smokescreen of theology, thus seeing its weakness, and pulled the stops of his organ accordingly. This destruction of theology is Palamas’ greatest philosophical achievement. (I rediscovered this analysis reading Meyendorff but am alone responsible for it.)

The weakness of theology was epitomized by St. Thomas Aquinas (c.1225-1274). Aquinas formulated a presumptuous theology for the west, whence came the attack against St. Gregory Palamas, Hesychasm, and Orthodoxy, wherein God and Aristotle’s “Unmoved Mover” (the “Supreme Unchanging” of the Tibetans) are viewed as identical. That is an egregious flaw in the foundations (see Introduction, and the Aristotle Module at the start of chapter 10).

There are monographs delineating three waves of culture shifts in Byzantium (books chronologically):

Haldon, John F.; *Byzantium in the Seventh Century, The Transformation of a Culture*; Cambridge 1997

Kazhdan, A.P.; Epstein, Ann Wharton; *Change in Byzantine Culture in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries*; Berkeley 1990

Fryde, Edmund Boleslav; *The Early Palaeologan Renaissance (1261- c.1360)*; Leiden 2000

The Hesychast Controversy falls into the third of these transformations (Fryde) as its most significant event.

There is an excellent encyclopedia article about Palamas:

Kapriev, Georgi; article, in Lagerlund, *Encyclopedia of Medieval Philosophy*

According to Kapriev, Palamas’ key argument was built from metaphysical energetics as set forth in book IX of Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*. Kapriev explains:

“The focus of Palamas’ system is the so-called ‘energy’ doctrine, which is developed by him to its ultimate consequences. This doctrine, being based on Book IX of Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*, was discussed by the Aristotelian commentators and especially by the Neoplatonists and, as early as the fourth century, a number of prominent Greekspeaking theologians adopted it in their teachings. It constitutes a crucial element of the metaphysical views of most of the Byzantine philosophers and theologians, however, without necessarily being the center of those doctrines.

According to this doctrine, each existing essence has its powers and gives expression to two types of energies or activities, which can be defined respectively as ‘causal’ and ‘existential’; though the essence of every being remains unknowable in itself, it becomes knowable by means of its realization in action. The energies of the first type have a beginning and an end in their end product, while the latter are the very life of the essence, its existential expression *ad extra*. From this perspective Palamas differentiates the creative and the deifying energy of God. According to Palamas, the saints are able, without becoming God by nature, to receive by grace the very essential or natural energy of God, which is uncreated and defined as the proper divine existence.”

Note the exchange between Michael Bordt and Stephan Herzberg (above, in chapter 10). The “essences”, “energies” and related issues are dealt with not only in book IX of Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*, but, possibly more importantly, in book XII (book lambda).

As in chapter 7, I feel emotionally disqualified to finish this chapter 11 of my own writing. I therefore, again, refer to the pertinent Wikipedia articles, which are scholarly, attached below. There is useful and abundant control information, accessible to non-Russian speakers through machine translation, here:

www.pravenc.ru (Russian Orthodox Encyclopedia) articles:

Krasikov, S.; *Barlaam of Calabria (Russian)*; <http://www.pravenc.ru/text/print/154245.html>

Gerasimenko, N.; Saenkova, E. M.; *Gregory Palamas (Russian)*; <http://www.pravenc.ru/text/print/168057.html>

Hagen, C. I.; *Gregory Akindynos (Russian)*; <http://www.pravenc.ru/text/print/166796.html>

There follow 63 pages with five scholarly Wikipedia articles (retrieved 2017-04-13; articles: Barlaam of Seminara, Gregory Palamas, Hesychasm, Hesychast Controversy, Palamism). After that, this chapter ends with an Appendix on the Philokalia.

APPENDIX ON THE PHILOKALIA

The Philokalia is a large collection of Byzantine Hesychast text for developing the Heart Prayer of Jesus, and thereby one's Heart Chakra (Sanskrit: Anahata). An English translation can be found online, for example at archive.org (2017-04-13). There is a certain amount of secondary literature but, I find, that is immaterial if one wants to immerse oneself into the Philokalia as a spiritual path. With a sufficient amount of preparatory knowledge, such as the spiritual aspects of Byzantine philosophy, the Philokalia is suitable for self-practice. In a sense, the Philokalia is the spiritual essence of the ancient Greek and Byzantine wisdom tradition today. As was pointed out earlier in this book, "knowledge" in the sense of epistemological subject-object dichotomy is not the purpose of such self-practice, since mystical union with the Divine is unitary, blissful, and uplifting.

The best theory text remains the *Nikomachean Ethics* by Aristotle (also spelled Nico-), especially its book ten. The Philokalia is the great Byzantine commentary on the last book (book ten) of the *Nikomachean Ethics* of Aristotle. (Re. above, end of chapter 10.) For further erudition, study my vols. 1, 2, 3 and 4.

The Philokalia (Ancient Greek: φιλοκαλία "love of the beautiful, the good", from φιλία philia "love" and κάλλος kallos "beauty") is "a collection of texts written between the 4th and 15th centuries by spiritual masters" of the Eastern Orthodox hesychast tradition. They were originally written for the guidance and instruction of monks in "the practice of the contemplative life." The collection was compiled in the eighteenth century by St. Nikodemos of the Holy Mountain and St. Makarios of Corinth.

Although these works were individually known in the monastic culture of Greek Orthodox Christianity before their inclusion in the Philokalia, their presence in this collection resulted in a much wider readership due to its translation into several languages. The earliest translations included a Church Slavonic translation of selected texts by Paisius Velichkovsky (Dobrotolublye) in 1793, a Russian translation by Ignatius Bryanchaninov in 1857, and a five-volume translation into Russian (Dobrotolyubie) by St. Theophan the Recluse in 1877. There were subsequent Romanian, Italian, French, German, Spanish, Finnish and Arabic translations.

The book is a "principal spiritual text" for all the Eastern Orthodox Churches; the publishers of the current English translation state that "the Philokalia has exercised an influence far greater than that of any book other than the Bible in the recent history of the Orthodox Church."

1979-1995 English translation by Kallistos Ware, G. E. H. Palmer, and Philip Sherrard, of the first four of the five Greek volumes, from the Third Greek edition. This was published by Faber and Faber.

From Wikipedia article (2017-04-14)

URL on 2017-04-14 of the English translation:

<https://archive.org/details/Philokalia-TheCompleteText>

Two selected introductory titles of the secondary literature, one scholarly, one spiritual:

Bingaman, Brock, Bradley, Nassif (editors); *The Philokalia, A Classic Text of Orthodox Spirituality*; New York 2012 (with chapter bibliographies)

Coniaris, Father Anthony M.; *Philokalia, The Bible of Orthodox Spirituality, Orthodox Spirituality for the Lay Person*; Minneapolis 1998

At the end of the introduction, I wrote:

I am ending this introduction, but would exhort you to read Roochnik on Aristotle's *Nikomachean Ethics* book 10.7-8 recited in this book concerning theoria (third eye vision, not "contemplation", key to Aristotle's philosophy of mystical contact, as an extension of book lambda of his *Metaphysics*. The translation for "bios theoretikos" should be: "visionary life" or "life of mental vision" but not "theoretical life", and not "contemplation". Aristotle pupil of Plato was an ancient Hesychast without the name of Jesus with an effulgence of very old and profound Atlantean knowledge, partly unfolding his wings in Byzantium.

It is now the time to turn to the correct argument of Roochnik. In order to understand why the English word "contemplation" is a perverse mistranslation of Aristotle's term "theoretikos" (bios theoretikos, life of third-eye vision), the Philokalia and its spiritual practice are necessary (or Kriya yoga, or advanced Buddhist mindfulness meditation, or similar spiritual contact path of the Third Force or preferably the Fourth Force). I cannot blame "the scholars" for this, since Roochnik is a scholar and sees the point with clarity.

Roochnik, David; *What is Theoria? Nicomachean Ethics Book 10.7-8*; in: *Classical Philology*, volume 104, issue 1 (January 2009), pp. 69-82

Aristotle's words mean clearly that "theoretical activity actualizes what is most divine in us". (supra, p. 69) Further, the passage in the *Nikomachean Ethics* that explains Aristotle's concept of "theoretical life" (Greek: "bios theoretikos"), "10.7-8 seems to invoke an 'exalted' form of contemplation".

Roochnik quotes a scholarly colleague: "Andrea Nightingale makes a similar claim: the 'theoretical wisdom' praised in Book 10.7-8 'is essentially amoral.'" (supra, p. 70) That assessment is correct. The virtue of bios theoretikos (life of third-eye vision) is not not moral but is amoral; it is spiritual. It is the highest teaching of the *Nikomachean Ethics*.

The correct explanation is found by Roochnik, as it has been by most Aristotelian scholars: "it is what the divine mind does as it thinks itself." (supra, p. 73) Roochnik comes close to writing that the bios theoretikos is a life filled with seeing the truth, since the truth is the goal of theoretical knowledge. (supra, p. 76) That is confirmed by his carefully derived sentence: "The truth is seen, and these passages suggest that human beings are by nature 'truthing' animals." (supra, p 78), and by his further carefully derived sentence: "The divine, thinking itself, theorizes in a permanent and maximal sense, and because it suffers no change does so immediately." (supra, p. 81) Roochnik succeeds in deriving precisely Aristotle's position on the concept of "bios theoretikos". It takes no spiritual intuition to achieve that, but it requires a logically consistent reading of the difficult ancient author.

Roochnik's concluding insight is (supra, p. 81):

"This notion of the hierarchically ordered continuum of theoretical activities can eventually be deployed as a tool with which to interpret the *Nicomachean Ethics* as a whole. For it too can be read as a comprehensive account of humanly virtuous activity that takes the form of an orderly ascent. Book 10.7-8 articulates the highest, the maximally actualized and therefore most pleasant human life."

The *Philokalia* provides the many missing elements for not only comprehending the precise meaning of Aristotle's words, but for realizing the spiritual contact phenomenon and spiritual practice behind them. It has long been known that Aristotle's writings, like those of his teacher Plato, have an exoteric, and an inner (akroamatic, esoteric) meaning. This very summary exegesis of the precise wording and meaning of the bios theoretikos leads us inescapably to the inner meaning behind Aristotle's ethical teachings.

12 *The Dialogue with the West Begins, The Plato-Aristotle Controversy*

Towards the end, as the empire was failing, began a dialogue with the west: The Byzantine mind was finished finding itself and, as part of one of world history's major culture transfers, started a process of listening to the west much more so than earlier, and explaining itself to the west, meaning first of all, to Italy. Its export commodities were the Greek language, humanism, classical art, its orthodox views of the Christian religion, the classical ancient heritage including, without limitation, philosophy, Plato, Aristotle, and much more, as is defined as the Renaissance incipient in its main thrust in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The dialogue has been eminently fruitful and continues.

The following, I find: stunning, insight came to me today (2017-04-05) when I noticed that the book by Gerhard Podskalsky S.J. would make a very nice addition to my short book list (see entry above in the front matters, Bibliographical Reduction). In the main text above on p. 7 I wrote:

The deep truth that is ever being sought is not so much the Divine as the Human, or call it, modernly, the transhuman, if so desired. The transhuman is inevitably transpersonal. It presents the vast range that is germane to that what humans experience as freedom.

That may be the overall key insight generated by the Byzantine wisdom wellspring arising from the Johannine turn early-on and from its later Hesychast peak. Theology is not a science and is not even viable since its purported object, God, cannot be known. This was stressed in the Hesychast Controversy by St. Gregory Palamas, with the ancient Aristotelian metaphysical essence-energy distinction. Theology is a smoke-screen, the central part of the veil. "Theology" is a contradiction of terms in search of a replacement. That conclusion came into clear focus in a current of Byzantine intellectual history, the Aristotelian-Palamite current, becoming the mainstream in Palaeologan late Byzantium. Theology as a contradiction is a construct that was enabled by philosophy. It vents key issues of human spiritual ignorance. The question how to distinguish philosophy and theosophy is thus moot. The root of theology in whatever form is a logical constructible falsity, and, through Byzantine philosophy, was thus exposed. The ancients were good examples of rationality in abstaining from such pure speculation. A viable approach such as Buddhism avoids it to this day.

Humanism, on the other hand, so far has been considered undefinable, and may remain so. It may be reduced, however, to a Max Weberian type around the typefying core structure outlined in my self-citation from p. 7 above. That, then - Humanism - lay at the heart of the late Byzantine dialogue with the west, with a high intellectual reform potential back then and to this day. If Byzantium, the alchemical melting pot, blended ancient and Byzantine archetypes of creative originality, this type towards the end of the Byzantine era and its derivation through centuries arguably constitutes the apex of it all. One may note that the mystical current is not in contradiction against Humanism in the view proposed here but is integral to it.

The second of the two major late Byzantine controversies mentioned at the start of the foregoing chapter was an extremely complicated thing: It is referred to as the "Plato-Aristotle Controversy" and ignited in the fifteenth century. It brought the two-way structure of the first controversy (chapter 11) into a mind-boggling sprawling multi-channel discussion of the heart of ancient classical Athenian philosophy, as transmitted and enacted by Byzantium, having, in the historical setting of the Renaissance age, strong aspects of self-discovery of that long forgotten but not lost tradition of humanity. That eventually became one of the main intellectual strands flowing into the making of modern science in the west.

The proposed Plato-Aristotle Controversy is as old as Plato and Aristotle itself, and continues occupying mindpower of philosophers into our twenty-first century today. It is not always interpreted as actually being a genuine controversy. The segment from its twenty-four century history that falls within the scope of this book may be classified both as “late Palaeologan” and “Renaissance age” in the overlap of those two meanings.

The late Palaeologan Renaissance age segment of the proposed Plato-Aristotle Controversy was a momentous event for the historical development of philosophy and science for the very fact that the controversy was rediscovered and was handed to the west during such a critical time period. The late Palaeologan segment remained inconclusive, however, in philosophical terms. To this day, no such thing as a final philosophical conclusion has been reached. The net result is much accrued scholarship about the individually distinct positions of Plato and Aristotle, respectively, complementing their many commonalities. The problem has thereby been excavated into considerable depths and details of the mind. My vol. 6 touches upon this; but that is a leap outside the scope of this book into Post-Byzantine leads of today.

In terms of the historiography of the late Palaeologan segment (Plethon, Bessarion figuring prominently in a swarm of lesser names), the segment is an episode of academic and clerical politics with the participants vying for political personal gain in view of the residual Byzantine Empire collapsing, and emigration to the Roman Catholic west being a favoured outlet versus integration into the Ottoman Empire. That is where the most salient aspect of the great complication is to be found that I mentioned. In terms of philosophical wisdom content, the late Palaeologan segment is an empty shell enabling key Byzantine thought forms to become mobile and to migrate west, there finding a new future. The shell debate itself was shallow, rhetorical, and overshadowed by opportunistic posturing of every one of its intelligent participants for personal political influence in an indeed most complex game. Since the Controversy but not its long prehistory was well-known in its time, this would materially have helped to form the long held image that Byzantine philosophy in its entirety is shallow, rhetorical, and overshadowed by personal posturing of its participants, a negative image with an unfair slant that scholarship is in the process of reevaluating and disproving.

The spark that ignited the Plato-Aristotle Controversy at the end of the Byzantine Empire came from a most able and learned Byzantine philosopher, George Gemistos Plethon. A 1921 dissertation

Taylor, John Wilson; *Georgius Gemistus Pletho's criticism of Plato and Aristotle*; Menasha 1921

<https://archive.org/details/georgiusgemistus00tayl>

pp. 6-9 summarizes his role in an accessible way. Research on the matter is ongoing. The leading specialist is John Monfasani, in a succession of Ernst Cassirer and Paul Oskar Kristeller. A comprehensive monograph of the intellectual development of the latest Palaeologan period is still a desideratum. A single short document outlining much of the ongoing research is John Monfasani's 15 page CV (per 2017-04-08) at

http://www.albany.edu/history/docs/faculty_cv/monfasani-cv.pdf

His two subject overviews, published in 2002 and 2015, are:

Monfasani, John; *Marsilio Ficino and the Plato-Aristotle Controversy*; in M. J. Allen; V. Rees (editors); Marsilio Ficino: His Theology, His Philosophy, His Legacy, Leiden 2002, pp. 179-202

-----; *The Humanists and the Plato-Aristotle Controversy of the Fifteenth Century*; in: Chiara Continisio; Marcello Fantoni (editors); Testi e contesti per Amedeo Quondam; Rome 2015, pp. 79-94

Updated information: http://opac.regesta-imperii.de/lang_en/autoren.php?name=Monfasani%2C+John

The Controversy shows that Byzantium was facing out and that, in a Hegelian sense, history's show was moving on. The exchange was of a temporal transitional nature and became consequential in the west.